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GOETHE'S LIFE-POEM

As set forth in his Life and Works

BY

DENTON J. SNIDER

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Goethe's Life-Poem

Part First.

Goethe the Young Man

(1749-1786).

Goethe at Rome, quite in the middle of his long career, takes a look backward upon what he has already passed through in his earthly discipline, and breaks forth into an exalted utterance concerning what he deems the supreme turning-point of his life: "I am celebrating as a second birth-day, as a true pal-
ingenesia, the day on which I entered Rome." (October 29, 1786.) So he writes in a letter to a literary friend who had been watching

his course for many years and who could probably appreciate him better than any other man. Thus the poet speaks of his new birth as he views himself rounding the chief turn or node of his total evolution. Many other declarations made in his later days could be gathered, showing the sovereign importance with which he regarded his Italian Journey.

The significance of these statements of his for us is that he emphatically periodized his own life in order to measure it aright and thus to comprehend it fully. The Pre-Italian time was to his mind one great Period which he had gone through and brought to a definite close by his sudden flight to Italy. What he did for himself with such persistency, we still propose to do for him in this account of his career. In fact the biographer of Goethe can easily obtain full instructions from Goethe himself for meting and bounding the great arcs of his life's cycle which we call Periods. His own stages and their landing-places he well recognized, for he was verily the careful self-scrutinizer in reviewing his own life-work. Really, he was the most self-examining of poets in spite of many a fling at thinking about thought, which he sometimes deemed his disease. Thus our narrative is in a certain degree pre-ordered by the

poet himself, and the organic points of his life-poem we shall seek through his own words to throw into a stronger light.

Goethe had, then, if we take his own language, a first and second birth, the one of nature and the other of spirit, between which two births he placed the primal grand sweep of his whole career. This early sweep of his years we are now to put together into one thought and one name, designating it as his First Period in accordance with his own survey and outline of himself. It lasted some thirty-seven years (1749-1786), embracing the total range of young-manhood quite to the margin of middle-age.

We are next to ask concerning his experience and achievement during this time. In general it is to be regarded as his great new movement and advance into another world of culture different from his own, which he has in essence appropriated. He is getting fully ready to be steeped in the classical past of Greece and Rome, for that is what he finds in Italy. Thereby he moves from one civilization to another, from modern to ancient, from Teutonic to Mediterranean spirit. Perhaps the deepest shock which the mind of man can undergo springs from such a transition of world-historical cultures. But Goethe had to perform this pivotal act of the ages that he

become the universal man, fulfilling an impulse of his genius which kept throbbing within him till the deed be done. Still such a soul-overmaking transition must be prepared for not only by study, but by a certain ripeness of the time and the man. Hence, this First Period we may regard as a kind of cultural apprenticeship to his race's development, which he is in due time to appropriate in its own home.

Accordingly, we are to put stress upon the fact that the German poet during this First Period never once quits German soil, not even at Strassburg, though it belonged to the French. He limits himself to the one folk and its consciousness whose most musical and soulful voice he becomes. He remains ethnic simply, patriotic, even nativistic, though he chafes at times against his nation's institutional walls. He will not yet go South into Italy though he beholds it longingly from the top of Alpine St. Gotthard; he will not enter the real France, though he stood near it many months, looking over its border as it were toward its center—Paris. This was, therefore, emphatically his Teutonic Period, now more than ever afterward, when he had transcended his ethnic narrowness. But inside the German boundary he wandered about a good deal during these years, and came to

know many of its chief localities, for example, Frankfort, Leipzig, Strasburg, Weimar, the mountains of Switzerland and Thuringia.

Germany was dominated at this time by French culture, which especially took hold of its ruling classes. Even the Duke of Weimar, Goethe's own friend and patron, is said to have preferred till the end of his days the literature of France to that of his own Saxon city of the Muses. Voltaire, more than any other writer, was the intellectual ruler of Germany, and her greatest king called him to Berlin to wield his authority of mind alongside the royal dominion of the sword. It was this French supremacy of spirit which Goethe assailed, as Lessing had done before him, and centered in himself and his group of fellow-workers the new uprising of German Literature.

It was a contradictory situation. Frederick the Great, by his victories over the French, especially that of Rossbach, awakened the national spirit of Germany from its death-like somnolence and made it live again. He became a new hero to the Teutonic folk, and his deeds began to sing in its soul. Where is the poetic voice to utter such a song? It had already started to hum on the air. But Frederick, the hottest foe of French political domination, was the warmest friend of

French literary domination. He could not endure the German hymn of his own victory. That the young Literature was but the worded outburst of the spirit of the nation which he had roused to fresh aspiration and expression, he had not the gift of seeing. But that is just what Goethe saw, and he had the genius to tap this deepest fountain of all true poetic utterance in the folk-soul, and to set it to flowing. Thus Goethe may be deemed the counterpart and co-worker of Frederick the Great. They both were participants, each in his own field, of the incoming Teutonic renascence, the one re-creating the State, the other the Literature.

Goethe was well aware of this deepest inner bond between himself and Frederick, in spite of the latter's protest. In his Autobiography (Book Seventh) he has thrown his searchlight upon his political compeer, and very significant of his own poetic method is it to note the emphasis with which he affirms the worth of the national deed and the national hero to Literature. Hence comes his appreciation of Frederick, the people's hero, as the real source of the new German renascence. Says he, in a deep-probing passage: "The first true and really more elevated contents of life came into German poetry through Frederick the Great, and the deeds of the

Seven Years' War. Every national poem must be shallow, or become shallow, that does not rest upon the ultimate human basis, upon the events of peoples and their leaders, when both stand for one man. Kings are to be represented in war and danger where they appear as the first, because they determine and share the destiny of what is ultimate, and thereby become more interesting than the Gods themselves, who if they determine destinies do not participate in them. In this sense must every Nation, if it count for anything, possess an Epopée, to which the form of an epic poem is not exactly necessary."

And now by way of counterblast we shall translate from Frederick's French—for he would not write German if he could help it—a royal thunderbolt against Goethe's youthful drama, *Götz von Berlichingen*: "a detestable imitation of those wretched English pieces, full of disgusting platitudes," which opinion is itself an imitation of Voltaire's venomous drive at Shakespeare. Goethe is said to have written an answer to this rather petty tongue-thrust of the high monarch, but to have suppressed it at Weimar, whose Duke was related to the Prussian king. Anyhow, the darkness was hardly worth the poet's candle. So much for the national background of this First Period, which runs nearly par-

allel with the reign of Frederick the Great, who died in 1786, the year of Goethe's departure for Italy.

Thus we mark that the poet sees himself centrally located in the great historical movement of his country and indeed of his time, of which he is the most universal utterance. But in deep symmetry with the world without, he also voices even more intensely the world within, or the subjective side of human nature. In this sphere his peculiar manifestation takes the form of love, the elemental bond between man and woman. Far more profoundly than ancient Ovid or medieval Petrarch he is the darling singer of Eros, the Love-God, whom he in turn loves as the very soul of himself and of the All-Self. So pronounced and life-unifying is this strain of the poet's personality and achievement that we intend to give him a special name in such a character, designating him as *Phileros*, not only the lover, but the lover of Love, which is the very heart-beat of his genius and drives its pulsations through all his days even to old-age. It would flame up again and again after quiescent lapses, would renew his creative energy and throb forth a fresh overflow of poetry, keeping him forever young in spite of time's mortal pallor in his cheek, and the flesh's ever-crisping corrugations. On the

whole, Goethe is the greatest lover the world has yet seen, running the entire gamut of love from its lowest sensuous note to its highest spiritual transfiguration in the mystical song of the choir of angels chanting of the Eternal-Womanly (*Das Ewig-Weibliche*—in the last lines of *Faust*).

So it comes that through this life-poem of the whole Goethe we must unfold from its beginning to end the character whom we call Phileros, really the one character of all the poet's characters, their unity and fountain-head. In his case love would stream down upon him as the elemental power of Nature originating all individuality, and revealing that deep harmony of sex which the creator himself of man seems to impart from supernal sources for the right genesis of humanity.

But behold! there rises up in opposition the foe of love, and hence of Goethe's distinctive genius, calling it the arch tempter of man and woman, and even their destroyer, labeling it and its poet with many ugly epithets in the name of morality and religion. Now we intend to listen to this negative voice also, which has its emphatic meaning and place in the race's spiritual evolution, for it represents the vast field of asceticism, monasticism, even sacerdotalism in part; its wide

range extends from the raptured saint to the mocking cynic, aye indeed from the unmarried Christ to the marriageless Mephistopheles. What a long list of antagonists, unloving and loveless, can be lined up through space and down time against our Phileros, the unique lover of love and its supreme singer^r and protagonist in word and deed! For our part we shall often take their standpoint and duly report the same with candor and at times with sympathy.

Thus looms up the portentous figure hostile to our Phileros and his work, a denying character whose many shapes we may summarize as anti-Phileros, who, however, belongs to this life-poem of Goethe if we are to reveal him in his full integrity and universality. For the universal man takes up not only himself but his opposite, as God does, and realizes both in his total achievement. So we can see that Mephistopheles, if he be truly the spirit that always denies, as he says he is, must deny his own creator who is now Goethe himself, and of whom he is a phase or stage projected into an active and independent personality.

Now it so happens that anti-Phileros, or his vicegerent if you wish, has written a very complete and in our opinion a very able *Life of Goethe*, truly a representative book, voic-

ing the vast population of Goethe deniers, who cannot be left out of the all-embracing life-poem. The author is a monk, a Catholic priest, hence a vowed celibate deeply hostile to Phileros—the Jesuit Pater Alexander Baumgartner, whose trenchant style can wield in full force the Mephistophelean scoff, along with the fiend's subtle scorching irony. To be sure the Jesuit is not like Faust, a denier of Philosophy, Jurisprudence and Medicine, and especially not of Theology, unless it be the Protestant or other heretical doctrine. Still his tongue is aflame with the Hell-fire of Mephistopheles for damning and burning up Mephistopheles, or what he opines to belong to that arch-demon. So we shall confess that the foregoing anti-Goethean biography of Goethe is more significant and unique, and to us more interesting and diabolically poetic than any other written life of the poet within our knowledge, which is somewhat extensive, but by no means universal, on this topic. We cannot do better, therefore, than to let this denying voice speak on due occasions for itself in a kind of antiphony to the poet's own song and deed, since both the counterparts belong at last together and should be builded into the one completed life-poem which we are trying to construct.

Such, then, is the general content of Goe-

the's First Period, which embraces his Pre-Italian years, and their discipline. The seeds of his greatest works are at present sown, but none of them ripen; *Faust* is not the only product of his genius which starts to budding in this spring-time of the poet, and matures gradually to the close of his last Period, which rounds out his fulfilment.

Here the inquisitive reader will ask about this seemingly formal periodizing of Goethe's life: Why keep thrusting it under our eyes which long to look ahead and not around and aback? Through the true order of his Periods we penetrate to the true order of the poet's completed accomplishment, and commune with his soul not only in its working but also in its work, both of which we find to be at bottom psychical. We thus can share in the inner process of his genius as well as in its vast realization. The Period images the movement of the poet's creative Self. But it reaches far higher in its suggestion, and adumbrates the process of the All-Self reflected in an individual life. If every man be made after the divine pattern, his career should message in some sort a revelation of his Creator. A right biography, especially of a great and complete career, ought, in its ultimate purport, to be a written Theophany, a manifestation of the soul of the Universe

itself in the universal man. This is also what elevates the single biography into participation with its creative norm, or prototype, which we may call universal biography. Thus the Period, seemingly so external, must be internalized by the true-hearted student till he sees it as the inmost process of the poet's achievement, which process likewise bears the supreme impress of the Creation as well as of the Creator.

Goethe's life is overwhelmed with particulars, many of them trivial, in fact unnecessary, and even dangerous to the poet, for his soul had to run the risk of getting drowned in the day's details. But he possessed the marvelous gift of gathering himself up from his scattered chores, and of poetizing his life afresh, in lofty moments which alone are worth the record. For they show the creative descents of the spirit from above into his genius which then inscribes the message. Now it is these written inspirations of his supernal Muse, which we are going to organize into the stages or Periods of one fulfilled career, which thus becomes the poet's total poem.

The First Period, accordingly, we seek to grasp outwardly as a definite portion of Goethe's life-time, namely, Goethe the young man, till nearly his fourth decade of years.

Now this Period, though but a part of a greater cycle, is within itself periodic and has its own inner process, which indeed it must have in order to be such a part. So it comes that the Period will have its own divisions, or rather sub-divisions which show that it also goes through stages of its evolution, which are to be designated and ordered according to their character. Now such division of a Period should have its special name if we would avoid confusion; accordingly we shall call it the Epoch throughout this book of ours, even if it sounds somewhat technical. But it is our purpose to survey and to define all the compartments, greater and lesser, of the poet's vast and multifarious activity.

In advance let it be noted, then, that the First Period contains three distinctive Epochs, forming together a process which at its deepest source is psychical. During this First Period Goethe is wrestling with the primal problem of the transmitted, established, institutional order into which he was born, and in which he must somehow continue to live. He has to work over into his inner life the great outer world of prescription, convention, tradition. Accordingly we shall see him pass through the following Epochs, each of which has its chapter.

I. The time of the externally prescribed education at home and at the university—the prescriptive Epoch. From Infancy to Majority—First Chapter.

II. The time of revolt against the transmitted order generally—his Titanism—the anti-prescriptive Epoch — the Frankfort Quadrennium—Second Chapter.

III. The time of inner renovation and reconciliation with his environing social and institutional world—the re-prescriptive Epoch —The Weimar Decennium—Third Chapter.

Such is a brief forecast of the poet's round of epochal experiences during his Pre-Italian career. Of course the justification of these divisions cannot be given before hand —their significance will only appear when the concrete facts have told their story.

CHAPTER FIRST.

FROM INFANCY TO MAJORITY.

Having thus in outline surveyed our first great field which we call the First Period of Goethe's total career, we next look inside this enclosure, and find that it has some strongly significant lines seaming through it which sub-divides it into lesser though clearly bounded departments. For instance, right in the center of it rises up to a mountainous height and prominence the mighty literary volcano known as *Storm and Stress* (*Sturm und Drang*), which has given its name to a peculiar form of written activity not merely in German but in Universal Literature. This activity or movement in Goethe's case did not last so very long, only some four years, but it made an Epoch, as it is commonly called, and so we shall call it.

But this sudden eye-catching outburst had a previous time of training and preparation, before it was able to evoke itself into being. We can hear its early rumbles while Goethe was passing from his twenty-first birth-day to his twenty-second at Strassburg, but the upheaval did not take place till he reached home in Frankfort not long afterwards.

Then the Storm and Stress broke forth in full fiery fury. Still the volcano had to gather its materials and fuse them, and otherwise get ready to explode.

Now this time of preparatory discipline and multiform youthful experience, extending from the poet's birth till his majority, is what we shall throw into a smaller distinct province or rounded enclosure by itself for the purpose both of adequate scrutiny and right organization. This earliest tract of years and their education we shall call the First Epoch of Goethe's entire career, or the First Canto of his life-song, for the poet's life, we repeat, is for us a poem, even in its outer mechanism and mathematical ordering, which it is our purpose carefully to set forth.

We shall try to lay down in advance some guiding lines which may conduct the reader helpfully to the ultimate significance of this prelude to the total Goethean symphony of existence. Of course it is the age of the youth's education, the time in which he is to acquire the transmitted schooling, from his mother's knee to the learned lecture-room, from the alphabet to the University, aye to his two Universities, with the last one of which (Strassburg) this Epoch closes. Hence it is a time of prescription, even if he makes boyish mouths at it almost from baby-

hood; he has to win the transmitted instrumentalities of all culture and to learn how to use them on his own account. He acquires the ancient and modern tongues which contain the spirit's treasures of the past—Greek, Latin, Hebrew, French, English, Italian—and he also develops a voracious appetite for literature in his father's library. To be sure, he resents all restraint, and secretly defies pedagogy; still he appropriates the traditional education, but flings off its strait-coat of laborious erudition.

At the same time he has to live and to be reared in and through a social and institutional order whose rule he begins to feel cramp him in his swaddling clothes, and the boy grows up in a mood of resistance to its behests. With his other learning he learns to dislike and even to defy parental and communal authority, as something alien to his nature. It is evident that the rebel Titan is waxing in him with many a little outbreak which, however, is at present soon suppressed by the overwhelming might of established custom and law. Still there is brooding in him during this Epoch the potential revolt against all institutions.

The climax of the tyranny of prescription was when his father forced upon him a hateful profession, that of the law. He yielded,

else he could not have bread and butter; but he felt that he was wronged by a paternal right in the very essence of his individuality. He was not permitted to choose his life's vocation harmonious with his hope, aspiration and aptitude. Goethe will never forget this misfit of man's calling and its bad effect upon human happiness and excellence. Indeed when he gets free himself, he will try to rectify it in others. Again and again we shall see him readjusting people of his environment who are displaced in their life-work, and hence both unhappy and inefficient. From this early experience he was led, we may suppose, to enact the part of a benevolent Providence for those whom he saw suffering as he once suffered.

Still in spite of all conventional restriction and repression, our poet continued to develop during this Epoch along the deepest and innermost bent of his Nature. The record of his love unfolding through these early years reveals the very soul of his being, the most intimate evolution of his poetic genius. The part of Phileros, the lover of Love, and also the central character of his life-poem, now has its prelude, and starts its connecting movement which interlinks all the creative nodes of his career. Three loves, yea four, elemental we name them, which seem to

come unbidden from supernal sources with a sudden overmastering downrush, he experiences during this adolescent Epoch, besides a number of amatory fancies not coercive in their urgency. Now this elemental love, deeply necessitated in himself and also in Nature, as he believes, is the inner driving-wheel of his Autobiography which records in his sixties with such fullness and glow the days of his youth, especially the present Epoch. But it also throbs the pulse-beat from the heart of his whole life whose ultimate movement it directs and organizes. Such is the part of *Phileros* which we wish to distinguish and emphasize as the golden strand stringing all his creative years together and their manifold works and occurrences.

Here may be cited a passage from one of his letters in which he sets forth love as the genetic source of all our knowledge, as the original power which enables the mind to create anew what it truly knows: “We cannot learn to know anything except what we love; and the deeper and more complete our knowledge is to become, the stronger and more vital must be our love, yea our passion.” (From a letter to F. H. Jacobi.) So it results, my reader, that we must love Goethe ere we can know him, even his faults.

But to recur to the general character of

this First Epoch, we are to see that it is a time of prescription, of tradition, of the acquisition of the past for the young man; he accepts the established order of his environing world of convention, even if the distant roll of Titanic thunder can be heard muttering an ominous protest. But our immediate duty now is to unfold the salient events of this Epoch reaching from the poet's infancy to his majority.

I.

In the Parental Home.

“On the twenty-eighth day of August, 1749, while the noon bell was striking twelve, I came into the world at Frankfort-on-the Main.” With such an abrupt initiative, Johann Wolfgang Goethe opens his Auto-biography, adding that the sun and stars were auspicious to his first appearance, though the moon shone in decided opposition. To this celestial stress he intimates, might be ascribed the fact that “I was born as if dead, and only by many exertions was I brought to open my eyes.” Foreshadowy life started with him in a desperate struggle which held out to the end.

Thus Goethe, looking back at himself from the threshold of declining years, speaks of the earliest moments of existence, hardly from his own memory, but chiefly from that of his mother, who, according to Bettina, failed not to tell of her labor in bringing such a prodigy into the world. The grandmother was also present, as was proper, a thin, white, neatly dressed old lady, hovering around the bedside "like a ghost," who exclaimed at the critical point, when the infant first turned up its trembling eye-lids: "*Daughter, he lives.*" Such is the record of Bettina, evidently drawn from the fountain-head with its right dramatic stroke. Nor is it human to omit the same reporter's account of Goethe's mother, who said of that moment afterwards: "*Then awoke within me my mother-heart, and has lived ever since in a continuous flutter of enthusiasm to this hour,*" when she was seventy-five years old, continues Bettina. More than any other man of genius known to history was Goethe his mother's son, and so in this little prelude to his life she may well be assigned the principal part. She lived to see that son the greatest man that Germany has produced since Luther, dying September 13, 1808 (born February 19, 1731, married August 20, 1748).

Here we shall place in first rank a charac-

teristic of hers which she herself has described in a letter of 1776: "I possess a treasure of stories, anecdotes, etc., which I pledge myself to prattle off eight days long without repetition." She had made herself instinctively a vast depository of folk-lore, which she could string out indefinitely in naive popular narration, yet with many a fantastic turn. So we have to think that it was at her knees that her boy first became acquainted with mythical treasures of the people, source of all true living poetry. The fountain of original Teutonic folk-song and folk-tale was tapped for him by his mother, and not by Herder, who undoubtedly contributed to this tendency, as we shall see later. Goethe in a little distich has celebrated this spiritual heritage of his mother: from her came "my joyous nature and love of fabling." Out of such maternal endowment, then the young poet took his bent to the Mythus of Peoples which will run through his whole life and form the deepest strain of his poetical creation. We shall find it active in him at the start as well as at the very last round-up of his career (in the Second Part of Faust).

The mother of Goethe had also the power of literary expression, the gift of the written word. It is true that she preferred, or said she preferred, to talk, to prattle, to spin her

stories out of her mouth minted fresh from her heart and imagination—the pen-point bothered her, confining the immediate gush of her soul to such a narrow outlet. Still she became quite a copious letter-writer through her long life, and developed an original epistolary style, probably the most original of its kind in German literature. Full of fantastic flights and humorous flashes, all perfectly easy and artless, she has not to pump for her jokes or her radiant metaphors, they spray out over you like an artesian fount up-springing from nature's own buoyancy. She has her special orthography which seems in-born in her words, mirroring doubtless the popular accent, like the best of Mark Twain's or Uncle Remus's; let not her misspellings be corrected, as the editorial mind is inclined to do for sake of the printed page; they are as native as her speech, indeed are an integral part of it. And indeed all her speech springs from the very Teutonic well-head, the pure unsophisticated utterance of the German woman-soul. So the foreign reader will feel through even if quite unable to catch many a little nuance of the native Frankfort dialect. As to her letter writing, she transmitted that gift also to her boy, who kept up the habit during life and has handed down to the future army of readers thou-

sands upon thousands of samples. Goethe's early letters have a good deal of resemblance to those of his mother, who retained her buoyant, metaphorical, fantastic style to the last. From this point of view her old-age's letters are often better than those of Goethe himself at the same time of life, for in his correspondence and otherwise he stiffened with the years. Her sprightly oddities seem to have found an echo in Bettina's writings. "She was a nature," said her son suggestively but vaguely, leaving the rest to be filled out, and this has been quite adequately done by her published letters, which have been recently proclaimed to have their accepted niche in the somewhat thronged temple of recent German Literature. In fact, it is worth the while for the student of universal writ to compare her with two other eminent epistolary women of Europe, the French Madam Sevigny, and the English Lady Mary Wortley Montague; all three are distinctly national, yet strictly feminine too; taken together they form a very attractive cheery alcove in the woman's section of European Literature.

The conception of Goethe's mother and of her influence upon her son would have a huge gap in it unless the religious side of her nature were emphasized. In one of her pious

splashes she has thrown out a luminous confession of faith which may be here written down: "I take joy in life, because my lamp still glows; I do not hunt out the thorns, but snatch up every little pleasure; if the doors are low, I stoop; if I can get the rock out of my path, I do it; if it be too heavy, I go around it; and so I find every day something which delights me; and then the key-stone—faith in God." So on her uplifting world-view she buoyantly swims over all the vexations of life; at the same time she has a passion for radiating human love on every person who comes within her range: "I hold all people very dear, and that is felt by young and old in my presence—I *bemoralize nobody*, but try to spy out the good side, and leave the bad side to Him who created man and who understands the matter best" (from a letter to a boy who probably had reason to appreciate it). A working theory of life she has thought out in her woman's way, and sprays it out in iridescent jets on the atmosphere about her: "I do everything forthright at a gush taking the most disagreeable thing first always, and I gulp down the Devil (with his black thoughts) without staring at him long." So the light-hearted woman has also her battle with the fiend, whom she gets rid of then and there, when-

ever she meets him, by a miraculous act of deglutition. In this way she too may be said to have had her Philosophy of Negation, whereby she could negate the negative, dealing with it far more simply but more effectually than her son, who probably never did quite succeed in swallowing his Mephistopheles, "the Spirit that denies." Well, who does? For it is a characteristic of old Splayfoot that he will turn up again after repeated human engulfsments—may he be accursed!

Aged Goethe remembered his mother well in her religiosity (wherein he did not always follow her good example) and thus speaks of her as late as 1824 in a letter to Zelter, who wanted one of her epistolary specimens: "Herewith a sample of my mother's letters which you desired; in it, as in every line of hers, the character of a woman utters itself who lived in the fear of God after the way of the Old Testament, leading a hearty life full of trust in the unchangeable God of the Folk and Family." She could always cite a comforting verse of the Bible for her needs—her choice was the ancient Hebrew writ, greatest of all religious folk-books; she was what the Germans call *bibelfest*, ready at all times to apply a line of Scripture for easing the ups and downs of life, and ready to fling a bucket of water on anybody's Hell-lit

tongue. Completely inoculated with the Lutheran phraseology, she imparted this linguistic trait to her son, whose biblical turns of expression have been often pointed out.

But that which she glorified as the chief crown of her existence was her motherhood: "Call me mother for all the rest of my days, as many as my old age may yet count," she writes to lively little Bettina, "that is the one name which embraces all my happiness." So she mothered that bright fantastic elf as her own who has so much spiritual kinship with herself; but her chief maternal pride rayed out upon her great son. Weimar not Frankfort was the home of her heart; no wonder she exclaims: "That place is the one which contains my all, everything which upon this round earth is dear, lofty and of value." Thus she re-lived her own in his genius, with many little meteoric scintillations from her Frankfort home in writ, word and deed, transfiguring the small things of the moment into honey-drops for all times as it has turned out—greatly to her surprise would this be, if she were living now. So we regard her with deep delight as a genuine artist of life, especially for her sex, building her happy existence every moment out of microscopic joy-cells.

With these traits before us we can well understand the part which the mother had in the training of Goethe as a poet. She was only eighteen when he was born, they grew up as children together, as playmates in the sunshine of life, she leading the way in games, stories,—and happy-making caresses. And this thought will rise to the surface: through her the son became more deeply attached to women than to his own sex; they touched him more deeply at the creative fountain of his genius, and their influence upon his life is more innate. That strand of the love of woman runs through his career from start to end, and on it are strung all his greatest works and his pivotal Epochs. It has often been remarked that his female characters are of a higher order than his male, he seems to possess in his own soul a better elemental stuff out of which he moulds them in his best moments. Through that mother flowed the influences, both pre-natal and post-natal, which brought him his genius, and twinned it inseparably with the woman-soul to which he was so responsive in act and utterance, and whose last message is his last words in the Second Part of Faust.

To this domestic group of children—mother and boy—must be added a daughter, Cornelia, by name, only fifteen months and a few

days younger than Goethe. She had a monopoly of the homely element of the family, while her brother from childhood was noted for his unique physical beauty. She scowled in irregular broken lineaments, and it would seem that her mind was featured somewhat upon her unattractive face. Long afterward the poet speaks very gently of her temper, but hints her lack of beauty and its spiritual influence. Cornelia evidently bore so deep a spite against dame Nature for this injustice that the sense of a born wrong passed into her disposition and there took fixed lodgment. One of her exclamations in her diary is still preserved: "I would give everything, if I were only handsome." Still she found an admirer, one a good deal uglier than herself, according to report and his picture—and she married him. Still she belonged to and grew up with that children's group of three in the Goethe household, and was deeply attached to her brother whose gift she appreciated and whose early productions she encouraged.

There was another strong bond between them: their common, though secret revolt against their father, to which the mother rather leaned, though always seeking to be the mediator, and having to perform the contrary parts of a doting mama and a dutiful

wife. This father furnished also his contribution to Goethe's nature and discipline and must be looked at, for chiefly through his unhappy pedagogy his boy was trained to be the contradictory imp who foreshadowed in himself the evolving Mephistopheles.

II.

Goethe's Father.

Having sought to win some idea of how the poet was mothered, we must also take a peep at how he was fathered—a much more superficial matter and hence easier. The son has sent down to us a brief glance in a versicle: "From my father I get my stature, and the earnest conduct of life." His physical body and his methodical habit are, then, his paternal heritage—worth something indeed, but quite external in comparison with heirdom of his mother.

Johan Caspar Goethe was twenty-one years older than his wife, more than double her age, when he married her. If we add twenty or even ten years to both, the difference between them would not be by any means so great. But she was a mere frolicking girl of seventeen at her marriage, and he was a middle-aged man of thirty-eight, crystallized

in habit and thought, very crystallized indeed, yet a worthy character and not without affection. He was wealthy for the time, had considerable scholarship with a bent toward literature; moreover he had studied law and was decidedly imbued with formal legality. There is no doubt that he was strongly impressed with his right of authority in his family. This he found abundant opportunity to exercise, as he had no economic occupation but lived from his money. The result was a secret opposition, indeed a sort of conspiracy on the part of his children against his domination. Such a situation is found often enough in the household; but that which rendered the present case worse was Caspar Goethe's undue love of pedagogy. He became the teacher of his children, and played the stern schoolmaster to them during the day. The result was that the parent was sunk in the pedagogue, and the home was turned into a drilling seminary, as far as he was concerned. Moreover he wished his boy to follow his profession and to be a jurist; but the son felt in his heart a decided aversion to be like his father. Even more rebellious was the daughter Cornelia who now had two grievances on her hands: against Nature and against parent.

It should be noted as a part of Goethe's

early education, though an unintended part that he was already trained in the family to a strong protest against transmitted authority. His father was unconsciously developing in the son a secret resistance to the existent order which will in time break out in action somewhat, but far more in mighty expression. The young mother was also put to school under her husband and compelled to learn Italian, music, and other things in which she had little interest. He was a great stickler for principles, and clung to the regular routine, while his three pupils built a little world of their own from which he was excluded.

Still there was a positive side to this instruction which must be duly noted. Young Goethe learned to read and write Latin with ease and retained the acquisition through life. He took French lessons, to which Italian and English were added, and besides he tackled Hebrew. He had a tilt at Greek, probably without much result, for in later life he renewed again and again his onsets. Goethe took pleasure in learning languages and had a gift in this line; here doubtless lay the most congenial field of his father's instruction. Still the limit was drawn upon this domain too: he could do nothing with the formal grammar of a tongue, it was detest-

able like all formalism—perchance because it was quite too like his teacher—though he loved to read, prattle, and even write in strange idioms, especially during his youth. Worse still he hated mathematics. But the best school for the aspiring lad was his father's well-stored private library in which he found many volumes of poetry and general knowledge. The German folk-books he devoured, “the whole set even to the Wandering Jew” as he declares, though this act seemingly had to be done outside the house. Of his own accord he seems to have picked up a knowledge of Jew-German from the ghetto of Frankfort, and he has left us a written specimen. Nor is to be omitted from the picture the stiff pedagogical parent playing the dancing-master to his children, and even if a little old and rigid, giving them lessons in the art of Terpsichore to the tune of a fiddle. But the home-drill continued: Goethe, with one brief exception, never attended a public school with its equalizing tendency. Such an education made for evoking his innate aristocratic disposition, which clung to him through great political upheavals which jolted his century.

Characteristic from this point of view are some expressions in his earliest known letter written before he was fifteen. The youth feels

himself called upon to confess his defects of character: "I am somewhat irascible . . . am very impatient, and do not like to remain long in uncertainty. Further I am accustomed to giving command, yet when I have nothing to say, I can be silent." Young Wolfgang ruled his mother and sister, and doubtless often circumvented his father. Later in life Goethe failed not to manifest this same trait of domination which in his father caused his youthful revolt. Even the autocratic Duke of Weimar called him a tyrant, and sometimes played the tyrant to the tyrant. Suggestive is the fact that when he comes to have a son, he will largely repeat his father's deed to him, and will largely get back from that son what he himself did to his father. In his Autobiography he confesses that he had inherited the parental pedagogical propensity—a good thing for us by the way, as his desire to teach was the source of many of his happiest reported conversations. One of his youthful companions long afterwards said of him: "We were always the lackeys." With this superiority was precociously developed his critical faculty: "We have many blockheads in our city" he declares scornfully with expanded illustration in a letter written at the age of fourteen. This trait will not fail to unfold with the

years to its haughtiest potency in the Mephistophelean scoff.

Goethe began poetizing early, and we are surprised to learn that the juridical father encouraged him in his youthful verses, as well as his poetical mother. Only one of these boyish attempts has survived and beckons to us in his works under the daring title: *Christ's Descent to Hell*. The Bible furnished him chiefly with subjects; we hear of an epos called *Joseph and His Brethren*, and a drama on *Belshazzar*, with some other scriptural themes. Thus his youth's practice was to transform the supreme religious folk-book into various styles of poetry, having his own kin mainly as audience. Two supreme things he caught up from this exercise: how his Teutonic people looked upon the divine government of the world, and how they uttered the same in their most exalted speech. Through the Bible Goethe may not have become very well acquainted with his God, but he did come to know his folk in its profoundest consciousness and in its most universal expression. Later with a change of mood, he flung into the flames these considerable works of his boyhood, which "could not otherwise atone for their youthful sins than through fire," as he says of them in a burst of Satanic damnation.

In the Autobiography Goethe has narrated quite fully a number of occurrences in his youth which he, looking back from advanced life, deemed formative for his career. He puts stress upon a puppet-theater, a present of the grandmother to the children, which he holds, "exercised the faculties of invention and representation, as well as the power of imagination and a certain technical skill." In his *Apprenticeship of Wilhelm Meister* he has dwelt upon the same circumstance with a rather tiresome fullness. The earthquake at Lisbon (November 1, 1755), with its awful and sudden destruction of life and property, is mentioned as having "shaken the boy's repose of mind, to the bottom for the first time." This mental shattering was religious: "God, the Creator and upholder of Heaven and Earth, merciful and wise according to the first Article of Faith, had overwhelmed the just and unjust with like destruction, and thus had shown himself by no means so paternal." This is perhaps the old Mephistophelean Goethe of sixty years rather than the boy of six. But he goes on: "In vain the young soul tried to recover itself from these impressions" which, however, even the learned clergy could not do. There is no doubt that this terrible calamity produced at the time a great religious question-

ing throughout Europe; there was a theological upheaval as well as physical; a vast outpour of penitential sermons and exhortations to conversion deluged the literature of the time, not sparing Frankfort, and in this excitement the child Goethe might have shared. Voltaire seized on the unearthly horror to ridicule the Leibnizian optimism, and Rousseau entered the lists against him—these two writers of French being then the most widely read authors in Europe.

Another great historic event which became inwoven with Goethe's youth was the Seven Years' War (1756-63). Frederick the Great and Prussia had arisen in the North, and represented on the whole the Teutonic against the Latin world, with their respective cultures and religions. Frankfort lay somewhat on the border, and in its sympathies was deeply divided. Members of the same family took different sides, and the feud seemed to become all the more bitter because of the kinship. The same phenomenon was often witnessed during our own Civil War in the Border States. Now the main point of the new experience is that young Goethe saw and felt this political rent enter and cleave his own domestic environment—his father was a strong Prussian sympathizer, while his mother's family (the Textors) stood emphat-

ically on the other side and possessed political power—the maternal grandfather being the city's highest official. Here, then, the boy first felt the shrill dissonance of politics, which ever afterward jarred in his soul. Still he at present sided with Prussia, with his father and with the national feeling which was mightily evoked by Frederick's victories.

The overwhelming defeat of the French and Imperialists at Rossbach (November, 1757) showed that a new power had dawned upon Europe. A month later came the second dazzling triumph of Prussia at Leuthen, followed by the capitulation of Breslau. A new power had dawned upon Europe, a new German hero had arisen, who was saluted by the fervid patriots as the fresh epiphany of ancient Arminius again battling for Teutonia against Roma. Goethe was perhaps not too immature to feel during these years the rejuvenation of Fatherland, though he was afterward not very enthusiastic over it for various reasons. One of these may have been the memory of that violent quarrel between his father Goethe and his grandfather Textor at a family festival when son-in-law and father-in-law drew sharp weapons on each other, with enormous loss of temper but no loss of blood—very properly not reported by

Goethe himself in the Autobiography, but dug out of the diary of a cotemporary physician by the name of Senckendorf who writes: "Textor threw a knife at Goethe who drew a sword. Pastor Starck (another son-in-law present) fell sick from fright at the scene," and hence probably the doctor had to be called who probed for the cause of the strange illness. (See the account with the citation in Loeper's edition of *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, notes to Second Book, p. 272.)

Another incident of this time was the entrance of French soldiers into Frankfort; one of the officers, the king's lieutenant, was quartered in the Goethe house for many months. Much discomfort and anxiety resulted, especially the father was disturbed by the continual presence of his foes, and could not attend to his pedagogical work with the same strictness. Young Goethe was given greater freedom, or took it, and picked up many a forbidden experience which he has duly recorded. When the war with its excitements had ended, another stirring event for the old city took place: the coronation of the Emperor in 1764. This we may let pass as an empty pageant, though set forth by Goethe with some detail in his Autobiography. The Holy Roman Empire was at the

time in decay and some years afterward gave up the ghost.

But the pivotal fact at this point is that the lover Goethe weaves through the ceremonies the romance of his first love, at least his first recorded love, and thus starts the deepest and most abiding strand of his whole career, both in life and literature. (See Fifth Book of his *Dichtung und Wahrheit*.) It is evident by the warmth of his style and the dramatic fullness of his account that the old poet deemed the affair the start of an era in his development. For Goethe is supremely the poet of Love, with its conflicts bringing defeat and triumph, as well as the keenest joys and the intensest sorrows. In this role we have already designated him by a special name, which will keep rising to the surface throughout his life, especially at its epochal turns. Phileros is now to step forth on the stage, a name taken from one of his own characters, not well known or rightly appreciated hitherto, but who is now to be promoted to his true place as the central hero, not of a single drama or epos, but of the poet's total life-poem.

III.

Goethe Preludes as Phileros.

Sitting at the table of an inn, among his youthful companions, who were having a little festival, Goethe, then fourteen years old or thereabouts, was exercising his talent in making verses for the occasion. This theme was assigned to him: "Compose us a love-letter in poetry which a bashful maiden might write to a young fellow, declaring her passion." Said the juvenile bard: "Nothing is easier than that," as if already an old hand in such business, and on the spot set about the task. "At once I called vividly before my mind the situation, should a pretty girl be actually inclined to me, and begin to reveal it in prose or verse." Great was the triumph of Wolfgang in the opinion of his young friends; one of them ordered right off a bottle of wine, but, instead of the regular waiters, behold a divine appearance in the eyes of the thrilled, adolescent Goethe, whom he thus wreathes in a halo of glory: "A maiden steps in of uncommon, yea, considering her surroundings, of incredible beauty. A little cap sat so neatly upon her little head which a slender throat joined very

gracefully to neck and shoulders. Everything on her seemed carefully chosen, and we could regard the whole form the more at leisure, since the attention was no longer drawn and fixed on her lovely mouth alone and on her quiet, true eyes," as she turned her back to bring the wine. So the Goddess has come down, and appears for the first time to the youthful poetizer—with what result?

"The form of this maiden pursued me over every path from that moment on; it was *the first permanent impression which any woman had ever made upon me.*" Such, then, we may consider the starting-point of Goethe the lover, as he himself evidently looks at it in that light. Still further: "As I could find no pretext to see her at home, I went to church and spied out where she sat; so I feasted my eyes on her during the long Protestant service. Still I dared not address her," till the suitable occasion came. Thus the poet portrays himself falling into the toils just when he had wrought himself up to a high pitch of imagination in composing the fictitious love-letter; in his fervor he pitches from image to reality at one plunge, and sinks suddenly overhead. To be sure the Goddess appears at the right moment in all the magic of her beauty to the impressionable youth still reeling from his poetic paroxysm.

Now it was so brought about by the same set of mischievous boys that the ardent young poet was called on for another poetic epistle in a kind of comedy which they were playing to make game of one of their crowd. Thus Goethe was now to write a love-letter when deeply in love, instead of the reverse as before; this gave just the opportunity to pour out his present feelings into verse. Necessarily the composition came under the eye of the maiden, whose name was Gretchen (Maggie), and who was secretly its object. She read it half aloud and very tenderly, when she said: "That is very fine, but pity that it is not put to a better, to a true use." Then at the passionate urgency of the lover she signed her name to the letter, as if it were her own. The outcome was a mutual confession and then a quick separation to avoid inquisitive eyes.

Whereupon the old poet, in his Autobiography, looking back through more than forty years, makes the following reflection: "The first inclinations of love in an incorrupted youth take decidedly a spiritual turn. Nature seems to wish that one sex shall perceive by the senses the Good and the Beautiful in the other. And so through the sight of this girl—through my attachment to her—arose a new world of the Beautiful and the Excel-

lent.' In such way again he emphasizes this epoch-making occurrence in his life, and enforces his training through love of which the present is the earliest instance according to his record.

The question comes up, how is it that Goethe is led to recall and portray this affair of heart in so much detail, with such deep interest, and with so great artistic delight? The fact is, when he wrote these earlier books of his Autobiography he was again in love with a young maiden—Minna Herzlieb. She inspired in him all the strength of his youthful passion for Gretchen, though he was hovering around sixty. It was a hopeless attachment, but tormented him for years. In accord with his method of self-relief he threw off his love-pain into literature. No less than three of his larger works sprang from his passion for Minna Herzlieb—*Pandora*, *Elective Affinities*, and the *Autobiography*—besides smaller effusions. But the wound continues bleeding for years; as he himself intimates, it shuns all healing, the heart fears to get well. So it medicines itself by literary utterance, as his wont was in all his amatory catastrophes.

But the novel of Gretchen is not yet ended, on the contrary many little incidents of loving talk and action are dwelt upon with a pe-

culiar relish. This Gretchen is also shown at the spinning-wheel, like the Gretchen in *Faust*. Promenades, poems, boat-rides are all narrated in a radiant afterglow by the old man rehabilitating his prophetic youth. The girl had aspiration, she wished to learn, she would go to the university, "if she were a boy." The lover was not slow to catch the hint and explained many things about the coronation ceremonies then taking place which she did not understand. Upon this point a citation may be made which thrills a chord of Goethe's entire life: "A young couple whom nature has in any degree formed harmoniously can find nothing which tends to a more beautiful union than when the maiden is eager to learn and the youth is eager to teach. Such a relation becomes as deep-reaching as agreeable. She sees in him the creator of her spiritual existence, and he sees in her a creature who ascribes her completion not to nature or chance or a one-sided effort but to a common will, and this reciprocal activity is so sweet that we do not wonder at the stories of the old and new Abelard" with his sweet teachable Eloisa.

Then occurs the stroke of destiny which separates the lovers forever. Some of their remote companions had been guilty of a criminal act—nothing less than forgery. Investi-

gation by the authorities takes place; Goethe, though innocent, gets involved through his association with bad company; all the hidden doings of his love episode are brought to light; Gretchen is questioned and found guiltless, but quits the city at once. On being examined about her relation to her devoted swain she answers: "I always regarded him as a child, my inclination for him was truly that of a sister." This response, being reported to the youth who was lying ill through the transaction, went far toward curing him of his agony. "I found it unendurable that a girl, at most a few years older than myself, would take me for a child." For was he not a full fledged adolescent? Still he could not for a long time get rid of that image which had given him so much delight and so much woe. The counterstroke of love is now first felt by him in all its affliction, often to be repeated hereafter. He would not allow her name to pass his lips, "still I could not banish the bad habit of thinking about her, of recalling her form, her ways, her looks," and the rest. Very unwillingly the old rememberer dismisses her, for she is present to him in a new shape which also refuses to quit its dancing before him.

A careful German investigator has searched the criminal archives of Frankfort for that

time and found no trace of what is here recorded by Goethe. Hence the truth of the occurrence with this early Gretchen has been questioned. It is certainly a little novel and is put together with much art. Founded on fact it doubtless was, and here we may recall Goethe's own dictum: All the occurrences there told took place, but not in the way or order in which they are told. Actual life furnished the crude material which he wrought over into art. As he describes it, the poetic function is to idealize the reality. The whole narrative is, accordingly, a little romantic episode bubbling up on the stream of life. And this will indicate the character of his entire book of Autobiography: the prosaic background of a human career is given with its epochal effervescences into poetry. Such are the two strands of man's existence in its ceaseless onward flow, fact and fiction, and Goethe will put both into his work making a new specimen of literature.

It may here be premised that there will be quite a number of such novelettes of love strung through his record, with their setting of merely historic or biographic occurrences. The stories of Frederika and Lili and others will be introduced in the same way. Of a sudden from unseen depths life wells up into a rainbow fountain of romance. And with

Goethe love had something elemental in it; unexpectedly it would heave forth from the very sources of his being, and make him vibrate to its throbs like an earthquake, till it found vent in some mighty volcanic eruption. Then for a while he could be quiescent again, and sink down to the steady commonplace of daily routine. When we come to understand him, we have to regard love's upheaval in him as akin to a phenomenon of nature, often terrible, even shocking to the moral sense, as many good people were shocked morally as well as physically by the Lisbon earthquake. Yet that too has ultimately to be taken as a part of God, if He be the creative All, perchance a part unexplained of the moral order of the Universe.

Goethe's loves, then, are the fundamental question of his life and of his poetry. They furnish the point on which he is most generally assailed, and which surely is the most difficult to understand. To denounce him or to defend him seems equally inadequate. I wonder if we cannot let him be as he is and try to comprehend him as a unique human phenomenon both in life and literature. The world is still grappling with the problem of him, often in bitter hate, often in hot defense, then again in an uncertain curiosity. At any rate the man himself recounting his own ca-

reer, has struck its deepest and most persistent strain in this story of the somewhat shadowy Gretchen. It is his keynote, sounded now at the start and winding through and in its way controlling his life's long and varied symphony. So we pick it up and dwell on it just here, as it will recur again and again in many different forms till the end.

Accordingly we shall give to Goethe, playing this deepest and most determining part of his varied life's drama all his days, a special name—Phileros, the lover of love, taken from one of his own dramatic characters (in his *Pandora*). For Goethe not only loves, but loves love, turning it back on itself and making it an object of itself, making it self-end and not merely an end unto something else. This was done not simply on purpose, by an act of conscious volition, but was the spontaneous upburst of his profoundest under-self, truly a manifestation of the secret springs of Nature gathered possibly for untold ages far down in her fathomless bosom. Goethe, then, is a lover indeed, but likewise a lover of Love; of such new personality he has to deliver the message, quite different from any thing which had gone before.

So we shall often have occasion to spy out subtly Phileros, the most central and distinctive of all Goethe's characters. Let not

the watchful reader slight him—the most spontaneous and formative energy, indeed the very soul, of Goethe's genius. Undoubtedly we have to construe this one essential character out of numerous manifestations of it scattered along the poet's days, and make it move forth through his life-poem. Love would dart down upon him quite unawares, like a God from Olympus, at first perchance tickling him, then scourging him, yea crushing him to death's point almost, yet thereby renewing him and rebearing him for a fresh productive spell. In fact Goethe gets old a dozen times, whatever be his years, but on the last edge downward into hopeless senility, his guardian spirit plucks him out and then plunges him into the fountain of love in which his genius is veritably re-born, and starts again singing the song of its youth with all its original power.

And now we may listen to a little blast from the other side. Anti-Phileros has not failed to insinuate that this so-called first love already indicates some previous experience in the same line on the part of the guileless adolescent of fourteen years, gifted certainly with a strong amatory pre-disposition. In that love-song how could he hit the nail so pat on the head if his were a state of paradaisical ignorance? Next our celibate Mephis-

topheles, the hater of love and the lover of hate, squirts a dirty jet of inuendos upon the fair maiden Gretchen, whose ideal vesture, given her so lovingly by the poet, gets badly besmirched, as she vanishes from our view. Well, her company was not the best, it was a bad lot of boys, even criminals among them, and Goethe conceals not the fact. Still her fascinating figure stays and is going to stay as preluding the very soul of Phileros and starting the long line of fair women whose presence had the power of tapping the deepest sources of his Muse and of re-creating his genius.

IV.

At the University of Leipzig.

We have seen that Goethe already in his boyish days had made himself a general versifier for occasions in his family and among his youthful companions; at Frankfort he had become young Johannes the rhymer. This trait he will carry with him to Leipzig as student of the University and will continue it through life. The reality about him and his own experiences he had the innate bent to turn into verse on the spot; so he calls his

poetic productions generally poems for occasions. On the side of expression, then, his central life-strand is made up of a long chain of poems, beginning quite with his infantile lispings and ending only with the cessation of speech itself. The autobiographer thus speaks of his earliest aspiration: "I had in mind (as a boy) to produce something extraordinary; but what it was to be about, would not quite clear up. . . . Still I do not deny that if I thought of any desirable piece of good-luck, it appeared most attractive in the form of the crown of laurel which is woven to decorate the poet." (Autob. end of Book Fourth.)

In the early days of October, 1765, young Wolfgang Goethe arrived at Leipzig to attend the University in general and specially to prepare for the vocation which his father had chosen for him against his will, that of jurisprudence. As cities, Leipzig and Frankfort were nearly of the same size, both hovering about 30,000 inhabitants; one of them seems to have had 3,000 souls more than the other, but which one of two it was, our best German authorities disagree. Let them fight it out; to a land of big cities, it seems but another controversy over tweedle-dum and tweedle-dee. The young fellow arrived at the time of the famous Leipzig Fair in which he took a

special delight. “I wandered through the market and the booths; my attention was drawn principally to the strange costumes of the people of Eastern countries, Poles, Russians, and above all others the Greeks, who charmed by their distinguished forms and their dignified dress.” Doubtless too he now experiences by actual sensation that the old classic people yet exists with its language, fundamentally still alive, and with somewhat of its ancient Spirit.

Our fresh student naturally began the course of studies prescribed for him in the parental household. But we have already found in his home the strongest inner revulsion and rebellion against his father’s plan of making him a jurist. It did not take him long, however, to find out that he was now his own man, and that he could largely mold his own future. Not only with home and father, but with his native city he had fallen out—a very recalcitrant youth. Hear him: “I rode away from Frankfort with pleasure, and unregretfully left behind me the worthy city where I was born and reared, as if I were going never again to set foot inside of it.” So he regards this step as a sort of new birth, or as a new severance of tender but enslaving ties which nature outgrows, and breaks. He muses on review: “Thus at certain

epochs children release themselves from parents, servants from masters, favorites from their patrons: it is an attempt to put one's self upon his own feet, to attain personal independence, to live his own life. Be it successful or not, it is according to the will of Nature." Or as we may say, it is man's endeavor to win a higher freedom, especially according to the prescription of Rousseau.

Well, how did our released youth employ his freedom? There is no doubt that he indulged a good deal in an irregular life; the penned-up adolescent, full of the first fury and keenness of early appetite, broke loose into the garden of sweet but forbidden fruit; we read of high living and deep drinking, of association with girls, "who were better than their name," and with others who could make no such claim, "through whom our name would not be bettered." To be sure, he usually wheeled about at the sharp corner, for that life-long peculiar compromise of his between self-indulgence and self-restraint he began to show in youth as his saving anchor.

Significant is the fact that in his revolutionary spirit he turned against the regular work of the University. He has left on record his verdant contempt for the whole Professorate, and his revolt against their instruction. This record, we are not to forget,

was penned by Goethe when he himself was practically at the head of a University, that of Jena, to whose instructors he may well have been giving an indirect lesson, after his subtle pedagogy. Especially to that accursed Jurisprudence he played truant, possibly out of memory for his jurist father. To be sure he claims that owing to paternal instruction at home “I already knew just as much as our teachers gave us.” The infernal stuff he could not hear twice. He took courses in Logic and Metaphysics, which he scoffed at and skimped, applying to them probably already the Mephistophelean mockery in *Faust*. But the Professors of those subjects in which he felt an interest and to which he was to devote his life, hardly fared better in his mood of gall. His inclination was to be poet, yet the poet Gellert’s lectures on poetry he found utterly flat and flaccid, wholly devoted to the old poetic grind and never once mentioning the new celestial luminaries, Klopstock and Lessing. To Gottsched, formerly the literary pope of Germany, but now quite dethroned, he pays a visit but makes the tall, big, bald-pated old man, who slaps the ears of a servant in presence of visitors, the center of a scene in an actual comedy, and otherwise laughs him off the stage. So the University, with its formal pedagogy, becomes quite as

distasteful to him as his pedagogical father, indeed quite similar, and receives similar treatment.

His revolt from the customs of the time and the place seems to have extended to his clothes. He dressed in an outlandish fashion of his own, so that the girls made fun of him, saying that "he looked as if he had snowed down from another world." The letter of a fellow-student has preserved this account of his make-up: "All his habits and his present behavior are absolutely different from his former conduct. In his pride he has become a dandy, and his garments, as fine as they are, show such senseless taste, that they mark him out in the whole academy." Deeper still cuts the Leipzig criticism on his language with its biblical coloring, its aphoristic snappiness, and especially its overflow of the Frankfort dialectal peculiarities in contrast with the pure classic German spoken by the highly cultured Leipzigers. So penetrating were these critical thrusts that Goethe long afterward complained: "I felt myself paralyzed in my innermost self and hardly knew any longer how I had to express myself about the commonest things."

Still it must not be thought that the young aspirer was idle; on the contrary he was very busy in hewing out his own way; he was mak-

ing his own curriculum of studies and pursuing it with a vengeance. In his father's library he had learned to devour print with leonine voracity; the appetite stayed with him, and the "forty book-shops of Leipzig" furnished abounding material of every sort, as this city was then the center of the German book-trade. The first appearances of the new German Literature were just seeing the light in his time; he hailed Lessing's *Laocoön* when it came out, illumining the literary world, "like a sudden stroke of lightning." He read Winckelmann's great work on the History of Art, and he tells how the author was expected at Leipzig when the news of his horrible murder fell into the midst of his friends there "like a thunderbolt from a clear sky." Wieland also laid strong hold of him, "the best of all those old poets." Probably his first real acquaintance with Shakespeare, or with one side of the many-sided British thunderer took place at Leipzig through a book of extracts known as "Dodd's Beauties of Shakespeare," a collection of the mightily worded passages which appeal so strongly to responsive boys of Goethe's age. Later he will be inducted more deeply into the soul of the English dramatist by Herder.

The theater became at Leipzig not merely

a passionate amusement of Goethe, but also a part of his deepest and most permanent education, a genuine study in his self-chosen curriculum. He saw good acting, especially two attractive actresses, one of whom afterward went to Weimar, Corona Schroeter. He even practiced the art, taking roles in amateur theatricals; thus he was being trained for an important strand of his life-work which lay in the coming development of the German theatre. Still further, he was preparing for his chief task in literature, for Goethe's literary expression is mainly dramatic, in form at least, even if his lyric genius is the more immediate and unforced; and the more enduring. His two earliest remaining dramas are survivals of Leipzig, samples of his University studies outside of the University, theses for which he received no degree, but which welled up from the native fountains of his spirit.

Another thread woven through his Leipzig life-course was that of art. He became acquainted with a painter by the name of Oeser, who possessed also the additional attraction of an agreeable daughter, very friendly to the young patrician of Frankfort, and easily stirring a responsive pit-a-pat in the heart of Phileros. The latter corresponds with the daughter at a later time and he praises her

father who “taught me that the ideal of beauty is noble simplicity and repose.” The same thought is found in Winckelmann, who also drew it from Oeser, once his teacher. Oeser indeed was rather a great personal influence than an original artist. He was an enemy of the rococo style with its convulsions and grotesquery, and he had a chief hand in driving it out of his part of Germany. He may be set down as noteworthy in Goethe’s evolution, since he gave to the latter a turn toward the classic ideal, which will culminate in the poet’s Italian Journey, and inspire a long line of poetic works during his classic period. So deep-seated became Oeser’s influence that he laid in Goethe’s soul a doubt in regard to his vocation: shall I be an artist or poet? That wrenching dubitation harassed the poet for more than forty years; he wanted to be what he could not—a formative artist in color and marble, instead of or perchance along with the word—and so he spent much valuable time in running counter to his own true genius. In this connection should be added the name of the engraver Stock, under whom Goethe practised etching and engraving, besides having a jolly good time with him in the wine-shop, after the convivial fashion of artists. Thus we observe our student taking quite an universal art-course out-

side the University. The intended lawyer seems to intend everything else but the law, disliking it, indeed defying it by his action, and flinging it overboard in his new freedom.

Goethe himself was well aware of his negative condition and thus comments on it in his Autobiography: "And so the time kept approaching when all authority was to vanish, and I was to feel doubt or rather despair even as regards the greatest and best individuals I had ever known or conceived." He is verily becoming his own young Mephistopheles, scoffing at all human greatness and worth, and denying all but his own denial. One of his ideals which he brought from Frankfort was Frederick the Great. But to this supreme German hero of the century, German Leipzig was hostile, belittling him in every way and criticising his mistakes, military and political, and thus overthrowing his triumphs.

The city had indeed felt his heavy hand in war, could not love him and would not appreciate him. We have already seen that Frederick caused a split in the poet's own family at Frankfort; still the father remained a stanch admirer of the Prussian king, and this admiration the son brought with him to Leipzig, whose vitriolic atmosphere gradually destroyed it. No hero any more—noth-

ing heroic—poor youth, unpoetic poet, hapless adolescent coddling his petty world-pain!

Of course our young denier, having so much of the Mephistopheles in him, soon found the latter embodied outside of him. This new companion was called Behrisch, and was engaged as tutor to a young nobleman. He was an oddity in dress and manner, but his special gift was in killing time and all that time contains. He took chief pleasure in treating earnestly the follies of life, and in running down some silly notion into endless detail of mockery. Culture and knowledge he possessed, was well versed in modern languages and their literatures; but the result of all his studies was to make him the better scoffer. Of course such a character was not troubled with moral scruples, and it seems that the tutor led both his friend and his ward into the Witches' Kitchen of Leipzig. The result was scandal and trouble of which Goethe lets us take quite a glimpse in his book. But Mephistopheles lost his job of tutoring and had to leave town, whereat some versified lamentations of young Wolfgang bubbled forth and have been preserved. Such was one of the Leipzig educators of the coming poet of Faust, who let him see what life was outside of books.

It is no wonder, then, that Göethe obtained the reputation among the staid University authorities of being "a dangerous student." For the Professor, dull and dignified, he had no respect; at the lectures he would draw caricatures instead of taking notes, and pass them around to raise a laugh and to distract the attention of the class. Of his father, even, he made game in his letters, writing him thus: "You cannot believe what a fine thing it is to be a Professor. I was altogether enraptured when I saw some of these people in all their glory. Nothing more magnificent, weighty and honorable." Then he adds in a Latin sentence for his pedagogical papa: "I thirst for no other honors except those of a Professorship." It is to be hoped that the old man never saw through the irony.

And now we come to the deepest, most intense, most real part of Goethe's Leipzig curriculum—it was his love for Anna Katharina Schönkopf (his dear Katy), whose father kept a wine-shop and boarding-house where Goethe ate and drank. She could not be called beautiful, though of an open, tender, attractive look; not very large, but active; not highly educated but endowed with prosy good-sense. Moreover, she was three years older than her admirer, without his vast overflow of fancy and emotion, a well-bal-

anced head, rather unromantic and deeply addicted to the humdrum of life.

So our Phileros is to play his drama again now at Leipzig, with many a new turn and with prolonged throes of intensity. But three prominent obstacles rise up in the way of their union: the difference between the lovers in rank, wealth and age. What will our young poet do as he dashes up against these barriers? Leap over them, of course, as they are more or less conventional anyhow; besides we have already seen his bound-breaking mood, his defiance of the established precedent. One of his letters of this time has been preserved (to his friend Moors, October 1, 1766), in which he exclaims: "What is station? A vain color which men have found for the purpose of daubing it on people who do not deserve it. And money is likewise a miserable claim of superiority in the eyes of a man who thinks. I love a maiden without position and without property, and now I feel for the first time the happiness which a true love produces." So he proclaims his fealty to Love, the all-leveler at least in the wine-shop.

Another point to be considered is the length of time which the passion lasted with all its torturing tortuosities; he takes his meals at the Schönkopf hostelry, sees the

girl daily at her work and play for two years and a half, during which he says he was part and parcel of the household. Yet the obstacles were ever present to his mind and hers; both doubtless believed that she could never become his wife.

But all the more madly dashed the foam-capped tempest of love against its limits. As Katharina was of marriageable age and time was passing, she naturally entertained some other suitors. All this became the source of the stormiest Olympian jealousy in young Phileros, he raved and foamed and set it all down in writing. Quite recently his letters penned during these paroxysms have been discovered and published. Let us try some extracts: “Ha, friend, now comes one of my moments!—O God, God—let me first get back to myself—accursed be love—O if you could see me, the wretched one, how I rave and do not know against whom I should rave, you would pity me.—Now it is 8 o’clock, my blood runs calmer, I shall talk to you more quietly—but not more rationally.” So he recounts in a series of letters his jealous perturbations, racked to agony by love yet bound fast to the Promethean rock. “I have tried the whole evening in vain to shed tears, but my teeth gnash together, and in that state I cannot weep.—What if she continues to act

coldly toward me! I shall punish her, the most fearful jealousy shall torture her—no, no, that I cannot do.” For his Katy in the wineshop can certainly trump his card.

Such, then, was the emotional life of the young poet during nearly three years of his Leipzig period, producing yet another and the most radical interference with study. Here were obstacles in the path of the world-storming youth, human conventions which he could not surmount in contempt even if man made them. Be it said to the honor of the woman that she was disposed to maintain them against her fiery lover; heart-crushing was the torment he caused her through his fits of jealousy, which sometimes rose to downright threats of vengeance, as we may see in some of his letters. An actual Othello he was in his demoniac rages; it is recorded that the pair went through “awful scenes” together. She was a waitress on her father’s customers in the matter of food and drink, and had to be friendly to all; but young Wolfgang seems to have been jealous of a smile given to anybody else along with a bumper of beer or dish of noodles. The result was a gradual estrangement on part of the woman. A letter tells of the breach: She and I “have separated, and now we are happy. We are now only friends—no more intimacy. We

began with love and conclude with friendship. O she is an angel!" Ominous words these for mere friendship. The fact is that Katharina Schönkopf has decisively dismissed Wolfgang Goethe while his passion is still as flaming as ever. She, the level-headed, practical, unimaginative bar-maid, for this she is, has had ample cause to discover that such a genius is an ever-burning Inferno, and she does not propose to enter Hell-fire for life. Moreover another suitor has put-in appearance at the Schönkopf dining table and pot-house, introduced by Goethe, too, as if fate would make him the instrument of his own undoing. This new boarder was a Doctor Kanne, two years older than the woman and already established as a lawyer; a steady, prosaic man, far more desirable as a match, and more like herself, Katharina must think. An attachment springs up and grows to the howling jealousy of Wolfgang, who actually gets sick, or makes himself sick, and has to go home for recovery.

Meanwhile this stay of the poet at Leipzig has left its mark not only on his life but also on literature for all time. It has come down to us in no less than four literary forms, each of which is employed by the poetical sufferer as a means of self-expression. They all reveal the same uncontrolled upheaval and pite-

ous self-lacerations of love-lashed Phileros, but from different points of view.

First is his most direct and stormy utterance, contained in the letters specially addressed to his friend Behrisch which have quite recently come to light. Disjointed, elliptical, apostrophic, they are a frenzy of speech, a delirium of molten lava-like passion splashing over the reader, who often dodges. They are the prelude of *Werther*, only hotter; they also show the epistolary form as the first elemental expression of his genius—a form which he will use to the end of his days.

Second is his lyrical output, of which two different volumes have come down to us. *The Leipzig Book of Songs* was actually published in 1769 with music by Goethe's friend, Breitkopf, of Leipzig. A second collection has been recently brought to light, with its dedication to Annette (Goethe's name for Katharina), most of them little effusions of passion for his adorable goddess, in Anacreontic tira-lira of love. They have their worth as showing a psychologic stage in the early development of the poet, but they are not equal to Goethe's later lyrics at his best.

Third is his little pastoral drama, *The Whimsical Lover*, in which he sets forth his own amatory caprices toward Katharina.

under the names of Eridon and Amina. With this pair of lovers is contrasted a second pair, Lamon and Egle, whose course of love runs smooth in its happy channel. "It is carefully copied from nature," said Goethe at the time (1767) in a letter to his sister, but it is quite devoid of the fiery intensity of his contemporaneous epistles already cited. Still he claims to have written it as a kind of atonement for his whimsical behavior toward his sweetheart. It was incorporated by Goethe himself in his works as his earliest drama, and as the beginning of that series of confessions, which run through all his chief writings, his heart's deepest confidences published by him to the public.

Fourth is the account of his Leipzig years, composed long afterward and given in his Autobiography. This is emphatically the cool reminiscence of the ageing author, and is well worthy of being compared with the other three utterances which belong to uproarious youth and are contemporaneous with the matters experienced. The most striking fact is the meagerness of his narrative about the very real Katharina in contrast with his elaborate fullness concerning the half-mythical Gretchen, his antecedent heroine, whom he saw only a few scattered times and for a little period. And his next story of love, that

of Frederika is wrought out in still greater detail and interest; yet he could never have had half as much to do with Frederika as with Katharina, nor could his passion for the latter have been less intense than it was for the former, in view of the exact evidence.

Let us declare at once our opinion: Katharina Schönkopf jilted our young Phileros and left him on his back totally upset and prostrate. This happened in neither of the other cases; the memory of his defeat was not a pleasant topic, even to old Phileros, and so he forgot to explain the joyless, unheroic novellette. He has himself put the three together, showing that they were present to his mind in a kind of gradation: “Gretchen was taken away from me, Katharina abandoned me, so that in both instances I incurred no blame, which, however, fell upon me in the case of Frederika.” Note here the order of these darlings, about which Goethe himself is not always consistent, sometimes placing Annette (his Katy) as the first one, wherein many German writers have followed him. But Gretchen is to be put first, as he does in the paragraph dealing with his second love: “My former inclination to Gretchen I had now transferred to Annette,” so he marks emphatically the transition. He goes on: “Of the latter I have only to say that she was

young, pretty, lively and lovely, and so agreeable that she deserved to be set up for a while in the shrine of the heart as a little Saint in order to pay her the adoration which often aroused more pleasure in giving than in receiving." How does this sound? Gallant externally is the tone, but internally without heart—a subject which he seems inclined to dismiss, adding a few complimentary common-places, with a slightly satirical tang.

Then how does it comport with those awful spasms of jealousy which burst forth when she did not give back to him and to him alone her adoration. (See his letters to Behrisch.) Such is the senescent Goethe reporting the adolescent Goethe, with the repertorial wry face made at a sour memory in spite of gray hairs.

Still he braces himself up to tell the main facts in a few short sentences: "I saw her daily without hindrances. She helped prepare the food which I consumed, she brought me, at least in the evening, the wine which I drank. There was many an opportunity and wish for entertainment. . . . Finally I was seized by that ugly distemper which seduces us to get amusement out of the torment of the loved one, and to dominate the devotion of a girl with tryannical caprices." Of this behavior he gives as

cause “the bad mood, produced by the failure of my poetical attempts,” but his contemporary letters show a different, more compelling reason. Still the truth will leak out: “Through unbounded and senseless fits of jealousy, I spoilt for me and her the fairest days, though she dearly loved me and did what she could for my pleasure. She endured my torment for a while with incredible patience which I was cruel enough to drive to the extreme.” Now for the real pivot: “At last I had to observe, to my shame and despair, that her heart had turned away from me. . . . But my passion only increased and took all forms; for I could not renounce the hope of winning her back. There were frightful scenes between us which did no good. . . . I had really lost her.” Moreover the other man had appeared, Herr Kanne, Doctor of Law, who afterwards became her husband, though Goethe will not mention his rival in this connection. The fact is he was distanced by the new suitor, being very decisively sent adrift by the girl—bravo for her! Still one drawback we shall have to note with regret: We shall now have no pretty novelette of love interwoven with the story of the author’s life in the case of Annette, as we had of Gretchen, and shall have of Frederika and others; old-aged Goethe is

not going to celebrate his long and fervent suit criss-crossed by a bar-maid. That were just a little too unheroic for Phileros, love's triumphant hero. So he refuses to idealize his conqueress, the humble Annette, though she be a true heroine in saving herself and serving up to her haughty tormentor a bitter dose of his own deed.

Now what happens? "In my frenzy I avenged my folly on myself. I stormed against my physical nature in manifold senseless ways, in order to do injury to the moral; this contributed very much to the bodily ills, under which I lost some of the best years of my life." The meaning of these veiled allusions are plain enough: he gave himself up to prolonged dissipation and sensual indulgence to drown his agony at the loss of Annette the passion for whom was of the most desperate and deepest-searching of his life, at the same time the most crushing in its humiliation. He adds now a glimpse of his great remedial gift: "I would have probably gone to complete destruction through this loss, had not my poetic talent with its healing powers come to my help." Still he fell sick and took to his bed, till he was nursed up sufficiently to go home to Frankfort for recovery. So Phileros has received the counter-stroke of love, its furious vengeance for

its wrong, for its wanton violation, and long will he remember it, and he will also record it, but not under his own name; the recollection of it will not flow triumphantly through his goose-quill.

Thus our poet has passed through the discipline of love's transgressor and paid the penalty adjudged to his deed by the Upper Powers. Yet he punished himself at the same time; his vengeful act inflicted upon an innocent heart was his own boomerang returning to the source whence it came. The rattle-snake bit itself in its frenzy and writhed mortally in its own poison. So he confesses to his deed, and on the whole quite adequately, which confession is not in vain, for it is in its nature remedial and soul-liberating.

In this connection Goethe sets down one of his weightiest utterances regarding his literary procedure: "And this started that tendency from which I have never been able to swerve during my whole life, namely to transmute that which rejoiced or tormented me, or otherwise occupied me, into a picture, a poem. In that way I got rid of it, correcting my impressions of external things as well as calming my internal upheavals. The gift could be to nobody more necessary than to me, whom nature drove always from one extreme to the other. Every-

thing, therefore, which has been published by me constitutes only the fragments of one great confession which this little book (his Autobiography) daringly attempts to render complete."

Such we may deem the profoundest course of training which the poet took at Leipzig University, even if not set down in its regular calendar. We can see that he has gone through the purgatorial process of penitence for the sinful deed: contrition, confession, atonement. To be sure his way is not that of the church, though it be essentially the same; its form is not religious but literary. He too must travel the journey of repentance and make undone his wrongful conduct through expiation; but he cannot call in priestly absolution, it must be won by himself in his own characters through self-expression by means of literature. Thus the pen becomes to him not merely an instrument of pleasure or profit, but of his soul's salvation. Such we may regard the deepest fact of his message which he will continue to herald to the end of his days. And this too is the pivotal point which makes his name and work the greatest in recent Letters. He represents a new and deeper expiation of errant mortality.

There is a second drama printed in Goethe's works which belongs to his Leipzig pe-

riod, called the *Fellow Culprits*. Four characters take part in the play, all villains at heart—two thieves and two adulterers—yet only one of them succeeds in getting the bad deed done, and in stealing some money. But the intrigue is so carried out that they all discover one another, and forgive themselves mutually. Goethe in his Autobiography tries to make out that the drama illustrates the words of Christ: “Let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone.” Still the poet had to acknowledge its failure: “The harshly outspoken illegal actions violate the aesthetic and moral feeling, and therefore found no entrance on the German stage.” But it remained a favorite of his to the last, and he caused it often to be played in the Weimar theater. On the whole the only explanation of his negative work is that it represents his strong reaction against law and the transmitted order, which was his main mood at Leipzig, though he says he felt it already at Frankfort. “In my affair with Gretchen I had seen how society is undermined. Religion, morals, law, station, relations, custom, all of them influence only the surface of city-life.” So he turns his pessimistic view into a drama, which always kept its hold on him, especially in his Mephistophelean humor, which on provocation

would burst forth in furious overflow from his tongue till its last fire-tip of sulphurous execration.

Still we are to note that his mood was but a transitory phase, the negative or diabolic part of the universal man who indeed represents the universe, not omitting old Satan.

Such, then, was the basic discipline which young Wolfgang Goethe received at the University of Leipzig. His chief instructor was indubitably the bar-maid, Katharina Schönkopf, who gave him life's profoundest, least forgettable lesson. All his other Professors and their erudite lectures were very superficial driftwood floating on the river of his love. Phileros had gotten an ultimate experience of his own innermost nature; he had attained a stage of self-knowledge far more significant than any other sort of learning, and had transformed Leipzig University into Life's University. But the shock reached down to the very roots of existence, and his life trembled in the balance. As already indicated, his health has given away, and so he turns down the road homewards for Frankfurt, while his head doubtless keeps running over with sober reflections upon his past doings.

V.

Home Again.

It is recorded that on or about September 2, 1768, Goethe, the undone student physically and mentally, returns to the family circle at Frankfort, consisting of father, mother, sister; he was still an invalid and destined to have many fluctuations of illness for the coming eighteen months. Exactly the sort of Goethe's bodily malady has never been determined. He was plagued with a sore on his neck which would not heal; then it was supposed he had a pulmonary trouble, with an outlook upon consumption perchance; but soon we hear: "Nothing is the matter with my lungs, it is my stomach which is out of order." On his sister's birthday, some three months after his arrival, he was attacked by awful pains; the good mother opened her Bible for a prophetic, possibly prophylactic verse, and behold this text of Jeremiah fell first into her eye: "Thou shalt yet plant vines upon the mountains of Samaria;" whereat she was much consoled and took new hope. Moreover, a kind of doctoring is introduced through a woman friend of the family, Fräulein Von Klettenburg, who

combines medicine and religion; but she also introduces a regular physician who unites in the practice of his art both constituents of the sick man, the physical and the psychical, to be sure, compounded with some peculiar alchemistic preparations. But we must recollect that chemistry as a science was then just beginning to throw off its swaddling clothes, and to step forth in its modern glory. Wolfgang's crisis was averted by administering a mysterious salt of the doctor's own composition, given only by him at the last turning point between life and death. Other influences were invoked by the mother and her female friend, influences which in these days would be called psychic or spiritistic, about the bedside of the seemingly dying patient. But betterment after two days set in though during three weeks he could not leave his room, or even sit in an upright posture for half an hour.

When Wolfgang was well enough, he turned back to ponder his miraculous cure, and sought to find out its method, which had so strangely vindicated the doctrines of Fräulein Von Klettenburg and her physician. So he began the study of books on alchemy, and experimented with retorts, furnaces and test-tubes, transforming his attic into a laboratory. He must have continued for some time

the pursuit of this alchemistic ideal, seeking the unitary substance of nature, the mother element of all elements, so dimly yet attractively floating before Paracelsus, Van Helmont, Welling, and other writers of the kind. Now the interest of these studies is that they are reflected in the early scenes of *Faust*, where the tireless but unsuccessful searcher for truth drops back into magic and tries to grasp the grand boon in that way, evoking an exalted vision of the Nature-Spirit, when it suddenly vanishes, and leaves him in his old skepticism. That doctor with his marvelous salt was a sort of believing Faust, but Goethe, after trying the experiments to a sufficiency, became the disbelieving Faust—truth was not to be won in that way. So this experience of the poet has written itself down on a page of the World's Literature.

The prodigal had returned home, but old ties were not restored. The father, stern, formal, and rather narrow, did not conceal his disappointment in his son who had come back without a degree, sick, petulant, shipwrecked seemingly in soul and body. The two had many a disagreeable tilt, the sickling being inclined to criticise right and left the appointments of the house with the freedom of Leipzig, the old man resenting

such unfilial impertinence. The mother's gift of reconciliation was often severely tested. Wolfgang pitied deeply his sister Cornelia, who in his absence had to take the concentrated cannonade of pedagogy from the schoolmastering parent. It had nearly killed her, destroying all pleasure of life; then, too, she was morbid over her ugly features, which seemed to repel all suitors from one who was most in need of love. That household was accordingly quite out of tune with itself, the two children only waited an opportunity to fly away for good from what was to them a domestic Inferno.

Meantime Wolfgang in convalescent periods would bury himself in the books of the well-stocked library of his father; his reading was considerable, but miscellaneous. Also he would break out into rhymes now and then in his stronger moods; some of these verses have been preserved. He studied a little philosophy, chiefly of the Neo-Platonic pantheistic cast, as he states in his Autobiography; "the mystical, hermetical, cabalistic writings contributed their part." Among other things he made his own religion at his leisure, being predisposed to such contemplation by illness, and also incited by Fräulein Von Klettenburg. A pantheistic world-view was indeed native to him; it stayed with him

through life and later found utterance in his devotion to Spinoza. He had a tendency to turn back upon himself to review his past; he re-read his Leipzig letters which had been carefully saved by the folks at home. The survey did not always give him satisfaction; he criticised himself and carried his damnable judgment to the pitch of burning a pile of his poems—his second expiation by fire of his literary sins.

His malady kept lingering, with fresh recurrences followed by partial allayments. What could be the matter? It is clear that his trouble was psychical as well as physical; his own people saw the fact, even his father. We have to think that especially Fräulein Von Klettenburg glimpsed to the bottom the source of his illness. We see by his letters of this time that he could not free himself of recurrent paroxysms of love for Katharina Schönkopf. To her he continues to send a letter once a month when able. He dreams of her, dreams that she is married, and at once writes to her asking if it be so. In a letter written more than fifteen months after his arrival at Frankfort he confesses to her: "My body is restored but my soul is not yet healed;" so he will have in consequence physical regurgitations of his malady. He cries out to her in vain regret: "If I were now

with you, how delighted would I pass my life! O if I could recall the two and a half years of Leipzig!" He seems to intimate some dark threat or stroke of fate: "I have always said that my destiny depends on yours. You will perhaps soon see how true is what I have spoken, perhaps you will soon hear news which you do not expect." He remembers still with a touch of jealousy "all the admirers big and little, crooked and straight, whom you have salted down with your friendship." He answered Katharina's reproof: "You are right, I am now punished for the sins I committed at Leipzig." Finally after an absence of more than a year and a quarter he summons courage to make the grand renunciation; he will not write to her more, and he begs her not to write to him: "I wish never again to see your hand nor hear your voice; I suffer enough that my dreams are so busy." Of course he refuses to write a poem celebrating her coming nuptials with another man, which poem it seems she, with unique daring, had requested: "I would be sure to say too much or too little." Still the next month he sends her a good long letter which he preludes with an apology for breaking his resolution "never to take up pen again to write to you." He intends to go to Strasburg for a course in the University and we

hear the request: “Will you not write to me at Strasburg?” He winds up the epistle with an outlook: “In two years I shall be back; I have a house, I have money. Heart, what is thy desire? A wife.”

Such is the new discipline of love which Phileros, heart-sick and brain-sick, has received from the Leipzig girl—a long weary illness threatening mind and body. He has experienced the pangs of the hopelessly rejected lover—the penalty of his own conduct; he has seen a rival step into his shoes, in spite of repeated attempts to storm anew the fortress. Still he has largely recovered, as he says, his health and composure. How was this brought about? Hereby hangs a fresh deep experience of the man long to be remembered and in time to be duly recorded in a literary confession.

Already the presence of Fräulein Von Klettenburg has been noted at the bedside of young Wolfgang, with her peculiar ministration of help. Her fundamental trait lay in her religious character: she held or claimed she held, immediate communion with the Invisible One and from that source derived special aid and power. Through her the sufferer becomes religious, and gets to know her spiritual associates: the Herrnhuters. There is no doubt that her remedial power lay in her

psychical influence over the rent soul of the hapless lover. Hers was a healing presence and her talk medicined not the body but self-lacerating spirit. Goethe has left an eternal picture of her pure womanliness and also of her inner evolution in the "Confessions of a Fair Soul," which form a part of his novel, *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*. She was probably his most direct experience of the Woman-Soul, or the Eternal-Womanly in its religious mystical exaltation.

Now Fräulein Von Klettenburg had also gone through her sore trials of love disappointed in her younger days. Her training accordingly, prepares her to be the mediatrix of the youthful Goethe in his present desperate tribulation. She had risen through a fruitless particular love to a fruitful universal love which brought her into immediate participation with God. Through her the wild estranged soul of our Phileros sought to know that Upper World which the blessed ministrant lived in. According to his account of her life, she passes through three loves, all with disappointment, but rises above them into heavenly love, and becomes mediationial for those who have had the same affliction.

So our Phileros, though he has occasional outbursts of misogyny in his letters, realizes

the woman as mediator, as savior in this long desperate struggle, physical and psychical, of eighteen months, with the dark powers of death. Never will he forget the lesson; it is stamped upon all his art at its highest moments. Again and again will he portray the woman as divinely gifted with reconciliation for the guilty despairing man, moulding her character out of far better and purer material than his men, necessarily more or less copied after himself.

Thus the old Goethe (of the *Autobiography*) looks back at the young Goethe in his first soul-transforming discipline of love. It is an ordeal which opens death's door where he peeps in, yea is on the point of passing in, when a saintly hand reaches forth and slowly draws him back, mediating him anew with life. Phileros, the lover of love, has in this deepest remedial experience become acquainted with a new kind of love, we may call it Love universal, which is the supreme fruitage of fate transcended through suffering, the crucifixion re-enacted through the loving heart of a woman, whose mediatorial power Goethe now feels and beholds in his own restoration and redemption. Such a female character starts from this present Frankfort experience with Fräulein Von Klettenburg and moves through all his best

works, appearing at the top of their highest fulfilment.

Such a process is profoundly religious in the universal sense; but the special religion of routine and dogma will turn denier of it, as not being its way, and possibly damn it as heretical if not blasphemous. *Phileros*, it would seem, cannot be saved by the beaten track of salvation, and great is the outcry. Still the main point is to save him, sinner that he is, and to heal him, that he may proclaim the new evangel of his redemption, which is the literary, not the theological, though the latter too has its place in the Divine Order. The spiritual deliverance must be won, be the form religious or sacrilegious, orthodox or heretical, Christian or heathen. Hence we cannot seriously listen to the clerical Mephistopheles at this point with his scoffing denials and damnations, for can we not see our bad boy *Phileros* emerging from the valley and shadow of his own Satanic deeds, through a strange remedial process healing and hallowing him at least, and doubtless others?

So young Goethe is well again, and ready to take a fresh stride in life's journey. His outer traditional education is by no means complete,—his father still insists upon making him a lawyer, but to Leipzig he cannot

return for a number of reasons, open and secret. To the University of Strassburg he will turn, where a new stage of experience awaits him.

VI.

At the University of Strassburg.

One more step we have now to consider in Goethe's prescriptive Epoch, as we have hitherto called it, when his father sends the youth to the University for another tilt at Jurisprudence. He will again obey parental authority, but the study of the law will be the least of his cares. He will follow his bent and harvest a fresh crop of life's own teachings not laid down in the curriculum. Toward Art and Literature push all his thought and striving; his education goes to school to itself, makes its own course and graduates him with a unique outfit for his real vocation which is not the legal one.

And let it not be forgotten! in this flowering of his adolescence, he will not fail to re-enact the part of Phileros in a new and far-famed drama of love. He has told it under several forms; it drove him to poetic production whose echoes throbbed still in his old-

age. The story of Frederika of Sessenheim belongs to those years of the poet and has gained through his magic touch a tender immortality which calls forth pilgrimages to this shrine of love. Hence in the present life-poem of Goethe the Strassburg episode rays forth far-illumining flashes over his whole activity. The environment of the place and the time acted creatively upon him and he reacted in turn, winning a new utterance of himself.

Says Goethe in a significant passage: "The chief function of Biography seems to be this: to set forth the man in his relations to his time, and to show how far the great Whole of which he is a part has resisted him or has favored him, then how he has elaborated out of such a situation his view of the world and of man, still further how he has mirrored that view of his outwardly, as artist, poet, or author." This is taken from the Introduction to his own Life as written by himself and touches upon these elements: the individual, his environing age, his world-view, and his production.

I. At Strassburg Goethe enters an entirely new set of circumstances, we might title it a new world. In general this may be called Teutonic, he becomes decidedly Teutonized in that city of the borderland, he be-

gins to take possession of his nation's spiritual heritage. Now the strange fact is that French or Latin culture dominated at Leipzig which rather rejoiced in being designated as "a little Paris." The professors there on the whole ignored the new movement in German Literature, even if one of them, Thomasius, had formerly changed his University lectures from Latin to the vernacular. At Frankfort the people were politically divided into the German and French parties, as we have seen in Goethe's own family; but otherwise that city seems to have been largely a center of indifference. Yet at Strassburg the change to Teutonia was marked, and in Goethe's case was intensified by unforeseen occurrences, such for instance as the fortuitous advent of Herder.

So it came about on the second day of April, 1770, that young Wolfgang Goethe, not yet twenty-one years old by some months, crossed the Rhine at Kehl bridge, entered Strassburg and took lodgings as a student where he was destined to stay nearly a year and a half (till August, 1771). It was indeed a pivotal turn of his life, in a number of ways premonitory of his coming career; he repeatedly gives to his narrative of it a vein of forecast. That river Rhine flows through German legend, song, history, and it is not

done flowing yet. It was the old boundary line between Teuton and Celt in the twilight of time; then between Teuton and Roman, when it begins to stream into human record. Strangely Goethe crossed the Rhine into Alsace to become conscious of his own Teutonic spirit there; a century later the German armies passed that same Rhine to take possession of what they deemed their own. It is curious to observe how many German writers of today regard Goethe's act as typical of their supreme national deed in the Franco-German war. The greatest German man passed the battle-line as the protagonist of his folk and the forerunner of the united German nation, to whose spirit he is to give its latest and highest utterance in its highest domain.

The people of Alsace had been under French rule for nearly a century, but they had remained German to the core, preserving their German tongue, customs and even costumes, especially in the rural portion of the land. To be sure over the higher classes was varnished a thin layer of French culture, supported by officialdom and the soldiery: A certain defiance was developed just in this borderland against the ruling stranger, who might govern externally but could not sway the heart and the intellect. Into this

peculiar social environment with its ever-active secret protest against the outsider and its dream of deliverance, Goethe came, and he felt the throb. At the dinner-table the students conversed only in German; food, cookery and everything else took the Teutonic flavor. From German Leipzig in the heart of the Fatherland, Goethe wrote often French letters; but from French Strassburg over the frontier his letters are German. So too are his thoughts, so too is his poetry, the latter undergoing quite a transformation in form and content. Such was the social atmosphere which Goethe now breathed and began to relish. It should be added, however, that during the century after Goethe, the Alsations changed a good deal, and went decidedly Frenchward; in that attitude the German troops found them at the last invasion, and so it is said they remain today, after more than forty years of German rule.

II. And now can we catch the object which first centered Goethe's attention and held it to the end, during his entire stay at Strassburg? That was the famous Cathedral which he first sees towering in the distance as he approaches the city and to which he hurries eagerly as soon as he has alighted at the inn. Hear him: "I hastened off to satisfy my dearest wish and to get to the Cathedral

which had long been pointed out by my fellow travelers, and had remained in my eye for quite a distance. As I first perceived this colossus through the narrow alley, and then stood before it upon the small square, it made upon me a very peculiar impression, which I was unable to develop on the spot, but which I bore about with me unconsciously." Then he ascended the structure, and took a view of the beautiful country around him as it lay in the sunshine with all its varied scenery, through which threaded the Rhine along its green shores and islands and castles. Finally he descended and stood before the venerable pile gazing at its façade; what it all meant he could not then understand, but he treasured up his impression, and continued to let "the astonishing monument work upon me quietly through its presence."

Such we may call a kind of key-note to his whole Strassburg period struck here at the very beginning and kept up to the last. The sight of the edifice seems to start some germinal emotions lying far down in the unconscious depths of his soul-life. He will study its plan, observe its unfinished parts and will complete them in idea; he will go back to its medieval origin, and grope after its builder or builders; it becomes a sort of daily repast to his creative genius, as he looks upon it at

all hours, going and coming, under every variety of illumination by sun and moon, in the distance and close at hand, as one great totality, yet with infinite details. Its echoes kept thrilling in him long after he had left Strassburg, as we see in the essay written upon it later at Frankfort. In fact the effect of it flowed over into his poetry in a secret stream of inspiration, as he himself remarked in speaking of those strongly tinged Teutonic works of his, *Götz* and *Faust*: “The Strassburg Cathedral left in me a very potent impression which can very well stand as the background of such poems.” So he declares calmly looking back from the gray hairs of his Autobiography; but we also have the advantage, in the aforementioned essay, of listening to some of his youthful dithyrambic ecstasies of utterance: “With what unexpected emotion did the view take hold of me as I stood before the structure! How did I return to it from all sides to behold its dignity and glory! How fresh fell its morning gleam upon me! With what joy I stretched out my arms toward it, observing its huge, harmonious masses alive down to its countless small parts, as in the works of eternal nature! How easily did the colossal edifice lift itself up heavenward, infinitely divided and yet everlastingly one! Thereupon revealed

itself to me in gentle anticipations the genius of the master-builder." This was Ervinus a Steinbach whom Goethe thanks for his great lesson, "that a drop of the spirit's ecstasy sinks down into my soul" and makes it creative along with thine! Evidently the poet thought that the vision of that great original act of creation was what kindled him to creation, and so he continued to commune with it as a sort of divine revelation in the form of art, and as a source of productive power.

Moreover it should be noted that Goethe was prepared to feel the religious inspiration of the mighty temple of God. He came to Strassburg still throbbing with the sacred words of his Frankfort priestess, Fräulein Von Klettenberg. His early letters from Strassburg have a tinge of religious fervor, indeed of pietism which we shall hunt for in vain through the rest of his life. A few days after his arrival he writes: "As I was, I am still, except that I stand somewhat better with our Lord God, and with his dear Son Jesus Christ." That does not sound much like Goethe's strain, though we hold that he always had religiosity if not much religion. Then in another letter: "I am altered, much altered, for which I thank my Savior"—which seems to imply his own belief in his

conversion. After almost five months' stay in Strassburg he writes a letter to Fräulein Von Klettenberg: "I have been today to the Holy Communion to keep in mind the passion and death of our Lord," and goes on to express his devotion still to "my Count" Zinzendorf, the Herrnhuter. It has also been handed down by Goethe's mother that on his arrival at Strassburg, he, the first day read this passage of Isaiah, to his great comfort: "Enlarge the place of thy tent and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy habitations; spare not, lengthen thy cords and strengthen thy stakes, for thou shalt break forth on the right and on the left"—which Goethe certainly did at Strassburg in accord with the prophet's exhortation, if not altogether in consequence of it.

And now this outbreak "on the right and on the left" is what we are next to trace in its outlines. It is true that he had come to the University again to finish his course of Jurisprudence in compliance with the wish of his father. But he soon found that with the help of a private tutor or drill-master he need not be troubled much about that study, which with all his efforts he could not like. So he was left free to range in obedience to his inner bent "on the right and on the left."

III. The first matter to be noticed in this

connection is Goethe's strong reaction against everything French—art, science, philosophy, language, especially against the all-dominating French Literature with its European prestige. Goethe himself has dwelt upon this fact at some length in his Autobiography (Eleventh Book). In Alsace he found everywhere an attachment to the old imperial constitution, to German speech, folklore, traditions. The political abuses of French administration already caused prophesies of a coming upheaval. French Literature, represented in the aged Voltaire had become senile, with an implied contrast which at least suggests the new youthful German Literature.

To be sure Goethe will later react considerably against this reaction. French culture had been implanted too deep within him and had too many points in harmony with his universal spirit to be banned from his life forever. He will return to France, to the Latin world, and especially to the great classical heritage of the race's spiritual treasures. That will form a long chapter in his future development.

But now his call is to Teutonize himself in preparation for his task. That Cathedral uttering the Teutonic folk-soul from its elemental sources we have noted as the object

which struck the deepest national chord in Goethe. It is doubtless true that the Gothic style did not originate among a German-speaking people. In northern Europe it is first found in Normandy where Norsemen, a Teutonic stock had settled, but had adopted the French language and culture. But the Pointed Arch, the determining feature of Gothicism in architecture, has been traced to Sicily, to Mahomedan structures, even to old Egypt and Assyria. Still it was the Teutonic spirit in France, England and Germany, which seized upon the Pointed Arch as its own supreme expression in art, as the outer manifestation of its own deepest feeling of selfhood. The Pointed Arch, like some other architectural forms, had to wander thousands of years before it found its own people. So Goethe, if not accurate historically, was right in the deepest sense when he took the vast Gothic minster at Strassburg as a mighty utterance of the Teutonic folk-soul, and still further of himself.

The colossality of the edifice must be regarded as an important part of the impress left upon the poet's mind. It stands there as an enormous Titan seemingly breaking forth into thousands of shapes each of which images the whole. The grand outbreak "on the right and on the left" foreshadowed by the

prophet he could behold in visible reality before him, and that reality also became prophetic in his soul. The magnitude of the Cathedral's appearance begat a corresponding magnitude of expression in his genius. Those furious power-words of his which are soon to burst forth into German literature, have a deep inner kinship with the huge Gothic pile talking itself out into its multitudinous shapes. That is, Goethe is not only to be Teutonized but also Titanized at Strassburg, where the Titanic minster contributes its influence.

To the German mind he is on the whole regarded as the third great or greatest hero of Teutonia against Roma. First comes Arminius (Herrmann), more mythical than historical, a nebulous but gigantic figure rising up in the cloudy North and overwhelming the ancient Roman legions in defence of the Fatherland. Second is Luther with his essentially Teutonic revolt against the second or papal Rome in behalf of religious freedom. Third is Goethe, the modern hero of Teutonia, not a political nor a religious hero, but a cultural hero we may call him, starting to break the more recent Latin fetters of the spirit, chiefly in literature. Now there comes to his aid unexpectedly, as if sent by Pallas Athena, who loves the youth, a man that is

to train him for his pivotal vocation as well as to furnish him with his chief weapons of warfare.

IV. This was Johann Gottfried Herder, who had by seeming chance dropped down into Strassburg to be treated for a disease of the eyes. He was born of humble parents in Mohrungen, a town of East Prussia, in 1744, so that he was 26 years old when he first saw Goethe. He was already fully matured and had written two of his chief works, critical but full also of inspiration. The philosopher Kant at Koenigsberg had taken part in his early training, but a peculiar, mystical, yet deep-seeing German writer by the name of Hamann who had especially inducted him into the appreciation of Shakespeare, had exerted the main influence over him. Coming by way of Paris, he had seen and conversed with the distinguished literary lights of the French capital; the result, however, was an intense disgust, which on the whole fitted into the Alsatian mood as well as into that of Goethe. The latter, having already heard of the arrival of the distinguished stranger, hunted him up and established a bond of friendship with him which lasted with considerable fluctuations during his life-time. In the Autobiography Goethe gives quite a full and appreciative account of Herder, starting

with this prelude of recognition: "The most important event, the one which was to have the weightiest consequences for me was my acquaintance with Herder, and the close connection with him springing from the same."

Goethe had been in Strassburg some six months before the arrival of Herder, browsing about a good deal in a general way, studying a little jurisprudence, reading much in a desultory fashion, conversing at the table with companions, some older and some perchance younger, but all of them his inferiors. The outcome was a certain spirit of intellectual domination and of youthful self-conceit in the young fellow which for his own good had to be taken out of him. Now Herder was just the man for such an operation in pedagogical surgery. Goethe narrates: "By various questions he sought to make himself acquainted with my situation, and his power of attraction worked upon me with increasing energy. I was in general of a very confiding nature, and before him, I withheld no secrets." So young ambition with its egotism lets out all its great plans, when comes the backstroke. "It was not long before the repellent pulse of his nature began to show itself, and precipitated me into a state of no small disagreeableness. I spoke of my occupations with some self-satisfaction, but he

was of a different opinion, he not only condemned my interest in such things, but made it ridiculous even to myself almost to the point of disgust.” A new sort of discipline is that, very different from the admiration and even flattery which he received and expected from his young associates at the dinner table, who echoed him and themselves with much hearty applause. But be it said to the credit of the youth that he recognizes the teacher whom the Gods seem to have sent him with a divine purpose; the castigation of that awful tongue he is going to endure for the sake of the treasures which it pours out with its gall. Gentle is his complaint: “I had much to suffer from his spirit of contradiction,” still the aspiring youth will hold on in spite of lacerations till the blood trickles. Why does he not quit? He cannot; well does he know that he has discovered just the man to supply his soul’s deepest needs.

It may be said that Goethe has now found his true University—not Leipzig, not Strassburg; but the University of Herder, upon whose course he enters with unremitting industry. “During the whole time of this illness I visited Herder mornings and evenings; indeed I stayed entire days with him and accustomed myself the more willingly to his

scolding and fault-finding, as I learned daily to put a higher value upon his fine and great qualities, his very extensive knowledge and his deep insights.” So Goethe kept going to the bedside of the sick giant, and performing all sorts of little services for him, since that gave the unique opportunity. But the deed of kindness had to be done without the thanks of the recipient who could even launch a sarcasm at his benefactor in the act of helping him. Goethe declares that “nobody could ever expect a word of approval from Herder, let one try as one might.” That was certainly not pleasant, but the pupil holds on with grip unshaken; for listen to those conversations “which were always full of meaning, whether the teacher was answering a question or asking it, or otherwise imparting himself; thus he kept advancing me to new views daily, yea hourly.” How narrow seems now Leipzig and Frankfort, and even Strassburg, as it was hitherto! “Of a sudden I was made acquainted through Herder with the whole new movement of the time and with all the special directions which it seemed to take.” Still mid these unspeakable blessings the counterblast of fiery damnation would fall upon the eager youth, “causing in me a diremption which I had never experienced before in my life.” So the spoilt child

of genius has to take big doses of bitter medicine from that sick couch till he may well query, Which is the patient, I or he? Both are indeed undergoing treatment, but for very different troubles. Thus Goethe pays his school fees to the university Herder, but receives untold reward.

What did our poet receive from this intercourse? A new appreciation of the world's greatest Literature; Herder revealed especially Shakespeare to Goethe, who will soon make the English dramatist his poetic starting-point. Other authors were read and commented on: Homer, Ossian, Goldsmith, whose *Vicar of Wakefield* has a notable place in this Strassburg experience of Goethe, since he will make it reflect his love-idyl of Sessenheim. But Shakespeare is the elemental Genius who seems to draw from the same sources as the builder of the Strasburg cathedral.

Moreover Herder taught his pupil to go back to the folk-soul as the original fountain of poetry. In this spirit he explained much of the Hebrew Bible, as he was a theologian by profession. He deeply appreciated Percy's *Reliques* and ballads of the people; under his inspiration Goethe began collecting the folk-songs of Alsace, and wrote some of his own. Herder had largely wrought out

and applied one of the sentences of his teacher Hamann: "Poetry is the mother-tongue of the human race." Moreover he insisted upon the poet's employment of one language which is also to be carried back to its well-head in the folk-soul; German speech became a leading tenet of his poetic and patriotic creed.

Still Herder had his decided spiritual limitations leaving out the matter of temper. His insights were sudden jets bursting up at random from the unseen depths with marvelous power and brilliancy but with little inner coherence. Herder to the end of his days could not *form*, having no native ability to organize his separate thoughts into one great totality. To the entire body of his works might be given the title of his first book which he called "Fragments," the key-word of his talent and his character. Herder himself is a Fragment, but a great and glorious one, whose essence lay in its enormous power of stimulating others to make it whole. So he stirred Goethe to a higher completeness, altogether transcending his own fragmentary nature. Moreover, Herder bloomed rapidly and early to what he became; at Strassburg he was doubtless in his very flower, which Goethe plucked and went on, making the wonderful fragment integral in himself and in his work.

But alongside of this Herderian fountain another source was tapped by the youth, even deeper and more compelling, that of love, and it began to overflow and quicken into the fairest romance of life. The part of Phileros cannot be left out at Strassburg, still less can the part of Frederika.

V. It is now accepted as a wee dot of biographic fact that Goethe first visited the parsonage of Sessenheim, a village distant several hours' ride from Strassburg, on the 13th of October, 1770. There he met Frederika Brion, the third daughter of Pastor Brion, then in her nineteenth year, and at once the fairest romance of Goethe's life began spinning itself in the deed. The resulting love-affair became a very important phase of the poet's human discipline; it started to flowing the deepest springs of his emotional existence, while Herder had stirred quite at the same time the intellectual side of his nature. Furthermore, according to his own confession repeated again and again it flung him into guilt, and turned the Furies loose upon him for retribution, like a second Orestes. In consequence he is brought face to face with atonement for the guilty act, which atonement he works out in his own peculiar way, which is literary. The remorseful experience brings him to a consciousness of

what he is to do with that pen of his in the new dawn of the written word just then glimmering around the European horizon and specially the German. Thus the tragic Goethe now appears in the actual deed done in the flesh, upon whose throes is deeply carved his heart's anguish. To be sure Goethe's own personal tragedy never quite reached death's point; he always succeeded in mediating it at last, as he says, through his poetry, which thus becomes for him and for his best readers mediatorial—a kind of vicarious offering which expiates Transgression. Moreover Goethe through his love for Frederika became the supreme lyric poet of modern, if not all time; many were the effusions spraying from his soul's depths into the sunshine of that girl's countenance; two of them may be said to have reached a height which he never afterward overtopped. And we are not to forget that this heroine lived among and belonged to the people; a rustic maiden, or we may call her a folk-girl, undoubtedly of finest type, whom the poet is to idealize or indeed transfigure into an eternal shape of beauty. On the other hand Frederika also must have possessed the spirit's remedial gift, as she, unmarried, survived her trial some forty-two years, dying in 1813 at the age of 61. Upon her tombstone a stray

gleam of the Muse has dropped down and carved itself there in lasting beauty: "A poet's sun rayed forth its full sheen upon her youth and made it immortal."

Significant is the fact that the unexpected descent of Herder into Goethe's career quite coincides in time with the epiphany of the Alsatian maiden. Ever memorable was that month of October, 1770, when two such divine appearances speeding down from Olympus of a sudden darted into his life's journey. Do these two striking phenomena belong together in some deeper purpose or stream of consciousness? We believe that they do, as diverse as they certainly are on the surface; they both lead the young genius to that poetic fountain of which he is now to take the deepest draughts—the fountain of the Teutonic folk-soul. To be sure the two conduits or channels tapping and conveying that ultimate fountain are in the most marked contrast, but they reach down to the same underlying source and terminate in the same individual participant.

Goethe in his Autobiography has wrought out with great fullness the story of his relation to Frederika. It is one of those novlettes which we have watched him weaving into the historic events of his life. But it is emphatically the greatest of them all, the

most complete in its details and the most finished in its artistic procedure. He prepares us by suggestion for what is coming; at least three times beforehand he hints of his Frederika, even to the fateful outcome of the story. That demonic kiss of the French dancing-master's daughter is a kind of prelude to the event coming fatefully on. The rejected maiden, as she madly presses her lips to his, utters the piercing outcry of a Fury: "Woe upon woe, for ever and ever, be to that girl who kisses these lips the first time after me! I know that Heaven hears my curse this moment. And you, Sir, take yourself hence as rapidly as you can." Goethe adds that he flew down the stairs with the purpose of never entering that house again, as if forefeeling the effect of the woe-freighted imprecation. In his intimacy with Frederika, his fear of his curse-laden kiss will dart again and again into his mind. Still he gives it in the hot fervor of passion and the curse falls, like that of Lear, or of Oedepus, of whom we are reminded by this unique dramatic overture.

Upon Frederika's first appearance before him the poet lavishes all the wealth of his descriptive glories. He had already entered the Sessenheim parsonage, Frederika's absence was the burden of the talk even with a

touch of anxiety, when in she bounced and “a most charming star arose in this rural Heaven”: such are the words of Goethe flashing out of his old-young eyes. She still “wore German,” that is, she dressed in the national costume of the German country-girl. “Slender and light she tripped along as if she had nothing to carry,” yet “with great blonde hair-braids hanging down her back” from her neat hatless head. “Out of her cheery blue eyes she looked with clear glances and her pretty stub-nose pried into the air as unconcernedly as if there could be no care in the world.” He says that she stood between the city and the country, but all his description puts upon her the rural stamp. Later she with mother and sister paid a visit to Strassburg, but the lover confesses that she did not belong there, she was displaced from her true environment in the country among the people.

So Goethe falls in love with a Teutonic rural folk-maiden of the genuine type in complete accord with his present temper and spiritual tendency. The inclination soon gets to be a love of the first magnitude, being the third one in his career already; in fact the artistic introduction and treatment of Frederika in his narration show quite a resemblance to his account of Gretchen, his first co-

erceive passion. Here it may be stated that Goethe in his Autobiography makes unconsciously a distinction between his many loves which shoot out all over the firmament of his life like Heaven's stars of the first, second and third magnitudes, and perchance still lesser ones which turn to a kind of star-dust or galaxy. For instance that affair with the dancing-master's daughter was to our Phileros but a love of the third magnitude if even so large, whatever it may have been to the passionate girl with her demonic kiss of a curse. Now his attachment to Frederika blazes up to a love of the first magnitude, a veritable Sirius of the stellar retinue, and receives proportionate attention. To him she represents the Teutonic folk with which she is ingrown, and of which she springs up before him the very inflorescence of love. We must repeat that through Herder and through the Cathedral he is already in a Teutonic mood, and in accord with his deepest nature must love the ideal Teutonic maid when she appears.

But now falls the counterstroke after months of dalliance—that torturing sense of guilt which he has so often expressed directly through open confession, and indirectly through literature. His letters indicate a gnawing self-reproach; anxiety hounds him

on account of his “passionate relation to Frederika;” from allusions somewhat veiled it is evident that he has felt “the invisible scourge of the Eumenides” which “may lash him out of his country.” Looking back from his far colder autobiographic years of the sixties he can say: “My heart was torn by the answer of Frederika to my letter of separation. . . . Now I was guilty for the first time.” He recounts his former loves: “Gretchen was taken away from me; Katharina abandoned me; now I was guilty.” So a penitential time sets in with works of atonement. One queries with much dubitation: What could the man have done to call up such throes of remorse—how far did his passion carry him? That is not known with exactness; German writers have differed much about the degree of violation which evoked such paroxysms of conscience. At any rate there can be no doubt concerning his deep and intense conviction of wrong; also no doubt concerning his bitter repentance: “I had wounded the most beautiful heart in its deepest part, and so there followed the epoch of a dismal remorse.”

And now for Goethe’s peculiar method of self-recovery, of winning a certain relief and forgiveness from his conscience. He is to appeal to that deepest mediatorial principle

of his nature: poetry. Says he: "At the time when the pain at Frederika's situation tortured me, I sought help in my old way, through poetic composition. I continued again to practise my accustomed poetic confession in order to become worthy of an inner absolution through this self-tormenting penitence. The two Marias in *Götz* and *Clavigo* can properly be regarded as results of such penitential contemplations, also the two miserable fellows who play the parts of lovers in those dramas." Thus Goethe punished himself through his pen, and sought to reward his female victims in the same way—which atonement they probably did not care for or even know about. However we catch here the spur which harassed him into production—the necessity of self-redemption from guilt. Still the purgatorial process was not easy or short; it kept recurring with new resurgences of remorse and goading him to still further poetic utterance. Margaret in *Faust* is largely a confession of scenes with Frederika. In his *Stella* is a direct outburst: "Retributive Fate, thou dost lie heavy upon me, and art just—O, pardon me—it is long—I have gone through an infinite suffering." And still the inner absolution would not come in spite of these paroxysmal offerings of sighs and even tears. Some eight years later

in his journey to Switzerland he felt compelled to make a diversion to Sessenheim and there in the family itself to seek some kind of forgiveness. He describes the fact in a letter of the time: he saw Frederika "who once loved me more beautifully than I deserved. I had to leave her at a moment when it cost her almost her life. I stayed over night and set out the next morning at sunrise surrounded by the friendly faces of the family, so that I can again think on this little corner of the world with peace of mind and can live placated in myself with these reconciled spirits." So he, self-accused, makes a pilgrimage to the scene of his wrong for atonement, and comes away with some feeling of forgiveness. That seems to be the last flicker of Goethe's novel lived by himself and Frederika.

Here, then, we win a glimpse of Goethe's deepest impulse to the written word: his redemption from guilt. He goes through the round of humanity in himself: transgression, reproach, penance, and forgiveness. It is what the church essentially prescribed for the sinful soul: heart's sorrow (*contritio cordis*), oral confession (*confessio oris*), reparation through the deed (*satisfactio operis*). But the mediation of church and priest has now become internal; man, still prone to sin, is to

complete the process of atonement within his own conscience. Moreover this man is now the poet, the creator of the word supreme which he will utter to his fellow men as his message. Thus it becomes a kind of new evangel to erring humanity, who by help of this fresh utterance are to win their self-redemption. Such is the deepest significance of Goethe in his writ and in his life, for his life is a mightier poem than any or all of his written things put together. It is the total man in his complete round of error, sin, damnation, hell, repentance and restoration—life's purgatorial journey which the poet travels and then narrates for the rest of us sinners. Thus he suffers for all and sings his suffering—in his way a vicarious sacrifice.

And now comes up the question which was asked the moment Goethe's Autobiography appeared, has been asked ever since, and will continue to be asked by a multitude of readers as long as the book is read: Why did not Wolfgang Goethe marry Frederika Brion? He was well aware of the question and of his condemnation, for he lived many years after the publication of this novelette. Several times he seems in conversation to throw out excuses, probably without believing much in them himself. At any rate he was caught in

double grip of Fate and whichever way he went, guilt certainly and possibly tragedy stared him in the face. Especially he was disillusioned when he saw the country girl outside of her poetic rural environment on her visit to Strassburg. He came to the conviction that under the circumstances marriage meant only a longer and a worse tragedy for both. But in the mad intoxication of love he had plunged forward to a point from which he could not retreat without inflicting pain and wrong. So he was caught in the awful criss-cross of guilt whatever he might do. Not only outer censure will be his, but also the inner laceration of conscience by going either way. So he portrays that mill of destiny into which his emotions have hurried him, as it literally grinds him for years in the torture. He has set forth this stage of guilt in *Meister*, where the old Harper sings of the Heavenly Powers:

Ihr führt ins Leben uns hinein,
Ihr lasst den Armen schuldig werden,
Dann überlasst ihr ihn der Pein
Denn alle Schuld rächt sich auf Erden.

This experience made him the poet. The mighty collision of human life went inside him and tore him to pieces. He was both sides of the tragic conflict, and whichever

side received the blow he was the sufferer. Still he had to act and take guilt with its remorse and penalty.

VI. At the end here we must take a brief look at the University, though it and its Professors meant quite nothing to the student Goethe. But to satisfy his father he did learn enough law, not to get the full degree of doctor, but to become a licentiate. Curious is the subject he took for his dissertation: The State is to establish Religion by law, but is not to interfere with private opinion. So he set up a kind of tyrant; the law is made and interpreted by the Prince or Ruler, the people having nothing to do with it. The people as self-legislative lay beyond his horizon; but he reached down to them in speech, song, mythus. The tyranny of the Three Unities in the drama he assailed, but not tyranny in politics. Goethe was a tyrant politically at Weimar; the Duke called him by that name, and had occasion more than once to assert his own autocracy against the autocrat.

Thus he brings to a close his studies at Strassburg, which belonged chiefly to the great University outside of the University. Much had he gotten very needful for his life's curriculum; but his prophetic instinct was bent to find and to appropriate what was to

enter into his future. The transmitted training had to be transcended by the genius, and Goethe's prescriptive education was simply set aside at Strassburg except in the one small point of the law. The Cathedral, Herder, and Frederika had been his real University. On the whole his career at Strassburg meant a breach with the traditional order, and this character he will soon embody in his *Götz*, when his pen begins to flow into newborn shapes at Frankfort.

When Goethe entered his native city in August, 1771, he felt himself a new man with a new vocation of his own choice, which he at once set about to realize. Hence it comes that a fresh Epoch begins with him, in its salient features the most sharply marked and distinctive of his whole career. This is what we are next to consider.

CHAPTER SECOND.

THE FRANKFORT QUADRENNIUM.

So we shall name the next four years of Goethe's productive life, affixing this title as a sort of temporal tag, to which we shall often hereafter have occasion to refer. For now Goethe the author breaks out with a kind of cosmic fury, world-making, and starts the mighty creations which it will take him a life-time to finish, and some he never gets done.

Volcanic is the term most frequently applied to the present grand upheaval of the poet which seems so sudden and overwhelming, as if giving vent to all the pent-up forces of Nature. Then follows an equally sudden and surprising quiescence, so that the human volcano appears almost extinct for some years after its prolific quadrennial overflow at Frankfort. Thus it comes that the present time is very distinctly bounded in Goethe's career; in fact it bounds itself as decisively as does the mountain which uplifts itself abruptly skyward out of the plain below. It is the young volcanic Goethe now passing through his primordial state of erup-

tion, as if he had to live over in his own soul the elemental stages of Nature's evolution. So we may be allowed to think of some deep ultimate sympathy which bonded the poet's life with that of his planet or perchance of the cosmos. The thread of Natural Science which spins through his activity till the close of his days may go back and connect with his volcanic time.

In such fashion we shall let Goethe's second Epoch at the start define itself, for it still is a part or stage of his Pre-Italian Period, and thus may be deemed in the total view a preparatory discipline for his larger life-work. He has to go through the present unclassic schooling before he can appreciate aright classic Italy. He has to realize first his own Northern Teutonic spirit ere he can unite it with the antique culture in a creative way. So we can glimpse at the start this Frankfort Quadrennium as a single epochal turn in Goethe's total evolution.

It is also designated often as Titanic, being supremely defiant of the existent order, and hostile to the old established Gods. One of these ancient Titans he will seek to limn early in his career, his Prometheus, whom, however, he could never quite conquer in writ.

Another designation of the present Epoch

emphasizes its contrast with the preceding Epoch by terming it anti-prescriptive, running counter to the realm of prescription, which has hitherto dominated the poet's life even if often under protest. It is thus a mighty revolt of the individual against his environing institutional order, whose validity he has to learn by colliding with it, and then portraying his collision, which thereby takes its place as a phase of Universal Literature.

His creative energy at this time, or his writing demon, as we may call it, is unique in his own life for its enormous output both as to quantity and character, and would be hard to parallel in any other great writer. He rises up a kind of Super-man in a new literary movement, and his Genius seems to be endowed with an elemental energy in its utterance, often turbid and uproarous, yet always strong and daring even in its defects.

Equally energetic and overflowing is the part of Phileros during this Epoch. Goethe as champion lover of the time if not of all time, shows his greatest activity of love at present; it too is volcanic both as to intensity and power, and appears in a perpetual state of eruption. Here too we note that strange connection between his productive and his amatory energy; the two are counterparts

and rise together from the deepest thrill of his being.

So much in general terms as a forecast of the present Epoch.

I. Quitting his Strassburg time of discipline, young Goethe returns to the paternal roof in Frankfort, charged to the muzzle with all the spiritual explosives of the age as the material for his Genius. Four years the volcanic outpour will last (1771-1775), with a creative potency which would not be easy to find in Literature. Taking the Greek symbol for such a character we have called him the Titan, who warred in the twilight of time with the deities of the Upper World, defying the established Olympian order. Such colossal characters, corresponding with his present mood, Goethe will pick out of the mythical and historical past, and seek to mould them anew in human speech during this the mightiest, most exuberant overflow of creativity of all his life's Epochs. Never again will he have such an unremitting spell of literary genesis, which indeed begets the chief works of his later years, and starts their evolution which, in the case of *Faust*, runs through all his days and joins them together in its unity. Moreover he will make himself the center of a band of like-minded writers and readers, who constitute the movement

known in German literary history as *Sturm und Drang* (*Storm and Stress*), which expression images its activity.

It was a struggle welling up from the deepest human sources, an uplift which we may name elemental. We can observe it as a stage in the development of all the great poets. It is an original force, like a force of Nature which takes possession of the man, turning him for a while into an element of Nature which acts beyond his will. He becomes as the volcano, the storm, the mighty onflow of the river. Shakespeare, when in full demonic obsession, shows this elemental energy at its height in the thunder of his words, for instance in his youthful *Richard III* and in the *King Lear* of his middle age. The Titan expresses the concentrated might of all individuality, as restrained by the limited, the established, the institutional. The world becomes too small for the aspiring spirit who will shatter it to fragments.

Language likewise must reflect this breaking over transmitted limits. Goethe's early speech often defies the grammatical organism, it too is explosive in word, sentence, paragraph, as well as in theme. What a maelstrom of apostrophes, exclamations, breaks in structure, sudden saltations of meaning out of ken! Note this chaotic and

often coruscating prose till it smoothes down into the classic flow of *Meister*, deep but transparent. Here again we feel that Goethe is tapping the far-down elemental sources of human utterance as it first springs from the Teutonic folk-soul. Herder had stimulated him to this strain at Strassburg; and he had taken his first lesson by collecting the Alsatian ballads of the people. Language also had become crystallized in that time of the spirit's crystallization, and must be shivered into its original atoms, for a great linguistic re-birth. Thus the Titanic revolution reached down to the prime vehicle of all literary expression, which like everything externally transmitted and imposed from the outside must be knocked to pieces, and if possible, reconstructed.

Thus then streams through this entire epoch an unearthly striving to get beyond and beyond out of this little earthly existence; limit-breaking the man pushes for the unlimited, for that which he deems his freedom. In his thought and imagery there is often a cosmical outreach; in this sentence of *Götz* we may hear the note of the new literary Superman: "To me it was as if I held the sun in my hand and could play ball with it!" Not only supra-terrestrial but supra-solar rises the daring conception, whose play-

ground is the cosmos—a far larger field than those old giants had who could only pile Ossa on Pelion.

Many productions written in this spirit rose roaring and surging along the surface of the time's turbid current, but they have vanished into the ocean of inanity except those of Goethe. And some of his survive not of their own worth, but buoyed up by the fame of his Muse, they float along in the up-bearing current of his greatest works.

II. There were many signs throughout Europe of the mighty protest against the old outgrown social order. The French Revolution was brewing at the time, and the ferment was not confined to France. Voltaire's bitter negations had traversed and leavened the whole field of European culture. Then came Rousseau whose cry "Back to Nature" became the text of the time and of Goethe. The entire institutional world was regarded as unnatural, artificial, fit only for the general bonfire soon to be kindled. French literature, then the mouthpiece of the spirit of the age, was peppered through and through with the eternal No, denying especially the transmitted system in society, state, religion, education. The Last Judgment on the old forms of man's associated life was already being trumpeted from every part of

Europe's sky, and it was forefelt everywhere that the universal doom would soon go into execution. Already during these very years on another continent the great new Revolution was starting. The American War of Independence has its parallel with Goethe's War of Independence which he fought out in writ during his present Titanic Quadrennium. Very remote were the two movements and quite unaware of each other, still they were both elemental expressions, or if you please, explosions of the same central spiritual energy of the time rounding the whole earth.

So this brief bit of Goethe's life has a far-reaching significance. It is not too much to say that here the poet becomes the main literary spokesman of the turn of an epoch; he is the voice of a node of the World's History. Today there does not exist probably a more characteristic and smiting utterance of that age than Goethe's manifold, but fragmentary outbursts during these four years. His words seem now the fore-words of the grand coming deed, the French Revolution. Never again, even if he wrote afterwards more perfect works artistically, was he so adequately the herald of his time, delivering its message from the supernal Powers in a speech well accordant with its character. Only in his

Faust, which has its conception and earliest form in this Quadrennium, did he so deeply touch the creative fountains of our modern spirit.

Let it be said, however, that Goethe's productions of this stage are stamped so peculiarly with the monstrous mood of the epoch and with his own anarchic condition, that they seem unbalanced to many people and hard to read. They certainly do lack the calm clear universality to which he as author evolved in many of his later writings. He is not in the present output a model in any wise, be it of style, thought, or man. Still just in this lies a chief interest of his biography; he had the power of unfolding out of this primal chaotic earthquake of his age and of himself into an Olympian serenity of soul, speech and writ. And right here it should be emphasized that Goethe passed through more stages, and more pivotal stages, of human consciousness than any other known man, and at the same time preserved the genius to fling them out of himself into vivid and sympathetic utterance. In this connection again we may repeat that the main object of the present book is to find and set forth the harmonious psychical order of these multifarious stages of the poet tumbling through one another backward and forward on the sur-

face, but manifesting an inner movement and law of their own.

III. On Goethe's return from Strassburg to Frankfort, the first thing to be noticed in reference to the youthful protester is that he finds himself in fierce rebellion with his whole environment. In the paternal home he was again subject to the narrow pedantry of his father, just the opposite of himself who was seeking to break loose from the fetters of the past. The strict old gentleman gave to the wayward son very sparingly of his cash, reducing the youth's free life to painful limits; for we may suppose that the young stormer was as prodigal of money as of genius. Thus his native town of Frankfort he grew to loathe for its petty social life, and its devotion to mere money-getting. He would flee to his attic for a free outlook with the Muses, or would rush through the city-gates for a carousal with boundless Nature. Above all he detested his vocation, that of attorney, and his first law-suit seems to have given him a disgusting dose of shysterdom. No wonder that he afterwards so often dwells on the wretched lot of the man whose strongest natural bent runs counter to his calling, to the work he has to do every day.

It seems too that he met at this time a literary personage, who was full of the de-

nying spirit of the age, and who, he says, "had the greatest influence on my life." This companion "had embittered himself against the whole world, and had allowed this morbid whim to sway him to such a degree that he felt an irresistible inclination to be wilfully a roguish clown (*Schalk*) or even a downright scamp (*Schelm*)" (See Autobiography Book 12). The name of this character was Merck, who evidently contributed a number of features and probably of sayings to the portraiture of Mephistopheles; indeed Goethe names him Mephistopheles Merck. But the deeper matter is that the poet beheld in this real demonic figure a very significant phase of himself at the present epoch, a living counterpart and spokesman of his own negative condition. Hence a strong affinity sprang up at once between the two universal soreheads, till Goethe sucked the egg dry, which was addle indeed, though sweet to his devilish taste just now. The later outcome of Merck must be noted: he committed suicide, the negation negated itself with due logic, and a sorrowful time of it the poor fellow had in the real tragedy which he got out of life. A strange immortality he has won by revealing the Devil of Culture in person to the creator of Mephistopheles. It is true that some modern commentators have warmly

defended the character of Merck against Goethe who is charged with injustice and even ingratitude against the man who had befriended him. We are inclined to think that some truth lurks in this defence. Still here we are to see what Merck meant to Goethe, at a very important turn in the latter's spiritual evolution.

It becomes evident that Goethe during this Frankfort Quadrennium had unfolded into a full-fledged institutional rebel, as we may generalize him for the nonce. He was out with his family, especially with the head thereof, his father; he hated his stifling community; he had little respect for the supreme State above him, the Holy Roman Empire with its justice; of Religion as established he was defiant, though he might indulge in a subjective play of it with Fräulein Von Klettenberg who passed away toward the end of this Frankfort epoch (in 1774). A mighty inner defiance to the whole transmitted world of institutions was his attitude, to which has been given the name *Titanic*, and which was soon to burst forth through him into its colossal literary expression. Though his reaction was born of a petty locality, and his spirit's protest sprang from his shriveled communal environment, his genius made it universal, flung it by his poetic might through Space

and down Time so that we read it today on the other side of the world as typical of a similar condition in ourselves and in our land and age. In fact it were not hard to point out contemporary writers who represent this stage.

IV. And now we must take note of the other thread, passionate, deeply internal, which winds through Goethe's life, and is especially to be designated in the present Quadrennium. His love we are not to leave out, or rather his loves, for with him this emotion had the tendency to break over the singular into the plural number. Titanic, barrier-bursting, soul-dizzying was his experience in this field. Two if not three stars of the first magnitude rose in his Frankfort heaven; then other stars of the second magnitude flash out fitfully, and even of stars of the third we catch some dim uncertain twinkles. Again we behold Goethe the lover as the profoundest and most abiding strain of his total personality; lover he is, unconfined, volcanic here too, indeed the lover of Love, Phileros, we have named him in this part of his life's drama, which part streams hot through all his utterances both in word and deed unto the very last.

Yet to this sweet dalliance with tender hearts Goethe will not fail to show in keen

requital the counter thrust: guilt, self-reproach, penitential sorrow. Again he will employ his literary method of confession: not by the secret word whispered in the ear of the priest, but by the open writ proclaiming in the face of the whole world the transgression and its punishment. Literature he turns into his confessional, whereby he unloads his sense of guilt, at least for a time. He writes during this Quadrennium three dramas in which he lays upon three faithless lovers the decree of death, making them tragic; he slays himself thrice upon the stage for his own deed done to Frederika. Thus he in his way puts himself into his self-made Inferno, branded with his sin, as an expiation due to his own conscience. After a not dissimilar manner Dante sent himself down to his special circle of Hell, and recognized himself in the victim of his damnation, though under a different name.

As already remarked these four years were the most original in production, the most germinal of his whole literary career, as well as the fullest. The time was a delirium of creation whose mighty push was to "widen out this narrow existence to eternity." It was a debauch of his spirit's freedom: "More than ever I was turned to the open world, towards boundless nature," away from the in-

stituted world of man. And the paroxysm went on without cease, as he states in his Autobiography: "My productive talent never quit me a moment for some years," even active during the night, and turning the day's experiences into dreams; "let there be only an occasion with some character in it, and I was ready" with my poem or novel, not omitting farces and satires, and lyrical outbursts. Such was his overflowing Vesuvius.

Of the chief productions of this epoch we may give a brief account, noting their great variety yet their common character.

I.

Götz Von Berlichingen.

Such is the name of Goethe's first characteristic production, dramatic in form, but defying dramatic form with a furious explosiveness. It has perchance a center from which it shoots forth in diverse directions, but hardly has a dramatic unity, against which it vehemently asserts its freedom. The transmitted law of the drama the Titan must deny and break to fragments just in writing his drama, else he were no literary Titan. Hence the chief interest of the pres-

ent piece is to see how its very form becomes formless, and how it illustrates both the character of the time and of the author. It is the sudden explosive detonating prelude which announces the advent of the poet Goethe. Scarcely had he touched the soil of Frankfort when the subject began to simmer, and such was his frenzy of composition that in about six weeks the whole work was written or rather erupted from his volcanic Self.

Significant is the fact that Goethe was never quite satisfied with the chaotic audacities of his first famous masterpiece. Again and again he tried to mend it and to put in theatrical bounds, making it suitable for the Weimar stage; in the main without success. If he had succeeded, he would have destroyed his work, for its essence is to be a shred of chaos, not of cosmos. No; it would not let itself be tampered with, even by its own maker. So it must stand with all its rugged fervor as a mountain uprisen in a night to mark the distinctive starting-point of Goethe's total life-poem.

The literary overture, then, to this Frankfort Quadrennium or Epoch, and in fact to Goethe's career in its entire sweep, is *Götz Von Berlichingen*, a drama with an historical setting which goes back to the Germany of the 16th century, but is intended to cast an

image of Germany of the 18th century, of the poet's own time. Scarcely had he settled down at Frankfort in 1771, when he dashed off with amazing rapidity his first form of *Götz*; the next year (1772) he recast the whole, so that in 1773 it was published in its present shape. Noteworthy is the incident already mentioned that Goethe often afterward tried to finish the unfinishable, and kept tinkering at it almost to the end of his days. Strains of this preluding work of his we shall often catch hereafter.

Götz is the heroic noble who, having fallen out with the stagnant environing Teutonic world, starts to defy it and to assail it in its leading manifestations. Thus he collides with supreme authority, that of the Kaiser, Maximilian I, and was laid under the imperial ban, besieged in his castle, but was rescued by an associate, and pardoned. But again he repeats his violation of the existent order, and perishes. In one way or other through the course of the drama *Götz* is brought into conflict with the established institutions of the age—nobility, city, church, state. This was the daring Titanic element in him which appealed at that time so strongly to Goethe. Still the poet realizes that such a character in the end is tragic.

Suggestive is the fact that Goethe does not

introduce into this drama of protest the mightiest protest of the age, that of Protestantism itself. In general Götz was contemporary with Luther. But the epoch-turning Teutonic attack upon the Latin Church is shunned by the Teutonic poet in his most Teutonic mood and production. It is true that ecclesiastics are introduced—a bishop with his court, an abbot with attendants; there then is the humble monk Martin whose name recalls Luther, and who in a single scene of the First Act speaks words of deep sympathy with Götz, and then drops out of the drama completely. One thinks that Goethe may have intended to make further use of this rather mysterious monk, but found that he could not without danger to his drama. So the conflict of Götz is limited to the secular institutions of the period, which are also in the condition of dry rot, and sorely need the reformer.

Now the poet interweaves the second chief strand of the play, taking a theme which was much nearer his heart than State or Church, namely love. Phileros Goethe here appears in all his strength, and writes the sovereign part of his work, imparting the most intimate confessions of his soul-life to the reader who can look through the outer covering which the artist throws over them in the secretive

skill of his art. Two women step forth in striking contrast, the demonic and the angelic. The latter bears the name of Maria, is a sister of Götz's wife, and loves the faithless villain Weislingen, who deserts her though she still remains faithful to him and attends with love and prayer his last moments. She speaks to him on his death-bed: "Forget all, may God forgive thee as I do." This scene (Act V, Sc. 10) is regarded as a spiritual transcript of the last interview between Goethe and Frederika. Such was the form which the consciousness of his wrong assumed in his soul: his first written performance after the deed of guilt must show the atonement. The poet sent a copy of his *Götz* to Frederika through his friend Salzmann at Strassburg, with the remark: "Poor Frederika will feel herself consoled to some extent when the faithless man is poisoned." That might be no great consolation to her; but to him it may have brought a brief balm.

But the demonic female of the play is really its strongest character, and to her we next turn. Adelheid is the name of this second woman of the play, one of the permanent personalities drawn by the poet. She is the subtle diabolic enchantress who controls men through their passion, rousing it to such a

degree that they are unable to control it or themselves. She cannot truly love, rather she loves her power of love, using it as a means. She is verily a product of the corrupt order, its striking symbol, whose meaning is glimpsed when she checkmates the bishop. In her way she may be deemed the Titaness, with her serpentine skill she plans to reach up and enmesh the young Emperor, head of the State. Also she is the foe of Götz, with his family life and his devotion to his wife, and she finds that he is proof against her grand implement, insidious passion. But supreme is her fascination over Weislingen who is the associate of Götz and the accepted of his sister Maria. Thus Weislingen becomes the slight connecting link between the two very distinct parts of the drama.

So we may designate Adelheid to be a female Mephistopheles, the woman as negative to the social and institutional order of her age, the sexual anarch who turns Love itself into the destroyer instead of the creator of man and his world. With her Satanic charm she transforms her lover, Weislingen, into her own destructive nature and destroys him with poison. Still she meets with the doom of her deeds, through a dark hidden Tribunal which dispenses the judgment of the Gods upon the criminal too strong or too

subtle for the State. Thus she too gets the penalty.

Taken as a product of art, the play lacks unity, being a series of vivid panoramic scenes which burst up rather capriciously with little connection. Composed of huge boulders tumbled over an uneven surface, the work illustrates the seismic upheaval of the author and of his time. Its scattered appearance on the printed page is typical. There is no doubt that Shakespeare was Goethe's chief model, and there are more indications of a study of *Julius Caesar* than of any other play. Herder's vigorous reproach was: "Shakespeare has spoiled you." Still in its deepest note the drama is not imitated but original, not Shakespearean but Goethean, and belongs to a new genius and a new age.

But the deepest break in *Götz* is that a fissure runs through it which divides it into two dramas, which have been called from their central male characters, the *Götz* drama and the *Weislingen* drama. The first had a political content chiefly; but that could not satisfy the young Goethe, he could not help adding the love-drama, in which the female characters especially rise to prominence. Here we note again our Phileros giving himself an utterance which constitutes

the most intimate and vivid portion of the play. The political part sprang from his external experience as advocate before the imperial tribunal at Wetzlar; but the amatory part was his own deepest self flaming up into expression. He would not have been Goethe the poet unless he had introduced the woman-soul, which is here given in its two opposite poles.

Accordingly we may say that in Götz the genius of Goethe has suddenly and violently erupted, scattering its scintillant particles pretty much at random. It has burst up from central fires hitherto suppressed under the hardened and even crystallized layers of the social system of the time. We are made to feel the gigantic striving to get free of the institutional fetters crushing the newborn spirit. Götz on the one side as reformer or rather as revolutionist, and on the other side the environing long-established law and custom, are the two colliding forces—the Titanic individual against the instituted world. Thus it is an eternal theme and recurs perpetually in one form or other, though at certain crises the fury gathers to a head and the grand final overturn seems to be at hand.

Still it must not be forgotten that Goethe makes his hero tragic and really self-undo-

ing. In spite of all the poet's sympathy Götz is a failure and his way is the way how not to do the thing. One cannot help remarking that this was the deeper though unconscious spirit of the author welling up to the surface at last and determining the result almost in spite of himself. Thus the institutional world triumphs and is the real hero of the conflict rather than Götz, though the latter started a beneficial hurricane in which he himself perished.

Hereafter Goethe will come to recognize this unconscious element in himself and in the world. The Titanic poet is next to learn consciously his own lesson that Titanism is tragic; he escapes his own fate by making his hero fated; he slays Götz and therein saves Goethe.

II.

The Sorrows of Young Werther.

So runs the title of a work by Goethe which probably stands next to his *Faust* in fame, in its typical character of the author and his time, as well as in its power stimulating reproduction in other writers. We

place it just after Götz, coupling the two productions as the greatest completed works of the poet's Frankfort Epoch.

The pivotal fact which gave to Goethe his theme as well as its outcome in the lover's suicide, was the following. There was a young official located at Wetzlar, where Goethe was staying, by the name of Carl Wilhelm Jerusalem, who had fallen desperately in love with the beautiful wife of a prominent diplomat of that place. Ardent, unhappy Jerusalem—strange name for a German—had allowed his passion to carry him beyond the bounds of propriety, and he had to be forbidden the house by the husband. He took the repulse so seriously that on the 30th of October, 1772, he ended his life with the bullet of a pistol—the tragic victim of an impossible love.

Now it so happened that Goethe at the moment when he heard of this suicide and its cause, was in the same forlorn condition. He had become deeply enamored during his stay at Wetzlar of a young lady who was betrothed to another and hence out of his reach. Thus he also was writhing tumultuously in the pangs of a hopeless love, when he heard, as it were the crack of Jerusalem's pistol as the only solution of his woe-begone conflict. The event stirred him from the last depths of his

being, and drove him to find some mitigation of his awful restlessness and world-weariness. But his antidote was not the pistol but the pen, which had the power of saving the author even if it slew the hero.

The name of the young lady was Charlotte Buff, famed undyingly as Goethe's Lotte. She married faithfully her betrothed, Herr Kestner, who curiously had loaned the fatal pistol to Jerusalem, of course for a different purpose, and who first told the story of the suicide to Goethe, in whose soul at once the sufferings of young Werther began to seethe and roll in violent paroxysms deathward. In some such condition the poet remained for more than a year, brooding over his cosmic egg, till on February 1, 1774, it began to hatch out. For the record runs that on said day he started to compose his work finally, and he pushed on steadily till it was completed in some two months, evidently from material already prepared for the most part.

In the present work the part of Phileros is supreme and all-embracing, it alone is the whole and nothing else is. We see Goethe as the lover indeed, but especially as the lover of love; he coddles his emotion, dwells in its joys and even more in its pains; he caresses his amatory sorrows, and shows himself in love with love's keenest sufferings. Phile-

ros has a great new experience; he is not now the victor but the vanquished, he makes the heart's full sacrifice, but without the requital. Hitherto he has been conqueror, as in the case of Gretchen, Katharina, and Frederika; but now he has to feel the unrequited, the hopeless, the impossible in the deepest strain of his nature. The shock reaches down to the primal fount of his very selfhood and compels to relief through literary utterance.

So we bring before us the second world-shaking eruption of Goethe's Frankfort volcano: this book known as *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, which kept fermenting in him nearly the whole Epoch, starting in 1772 and ending with the publication of the novel in Autumn, 1774. The two works *Götz* and *Werther* are altogether the greatest of the poet's early creations; very different in many ways, they nevertheless show that they belong to the same spiritual upheaval. Goethe fifty years later speaking to Eckermann (Jan. 2, 1824) indicates this purport: "In the much-bespooken Wertherism, we observe that it belongs in the life-experience of every individual who with an inborn free instinct has to learn to accommodate himself to the narrowing forms of an antiquated world." So it comes that both works manifest a conflict with an old instituted order, against which

they revolt, with tragic result, be it noted in each case.

The first striking difference which grips the mind of the reader is that *Werther* has far more concentration in form, in matter and in spirit than *Götz* whose scattered character was above observed. There is now the one central ever-recurrent theme, and the one central character with whom two others are conjoined, the woman and her betrothed, both of whom stand firm as the rock of ages, while an ocean of sentiment dashes madly about them. To be sure we shall later point out that a deep line of scission enters the work before it is completed. The interest, however, is that of one soul which gives itself up to emotion as its Fate which swirls it around in an incessant tempest. From this side it is another portrayal of Goethe's own personality at the present stage, and a confession as well as a redemption. The poet here tackles that stormy Titanic emotion of his, often threatening self-destruction till he works it over and wrings it out of himself by writ, getting thus at least a partial release by slaying not himself, but the semblance of himself at this epoch of his evolution conjured up by his art.

Goethe himself has depicted (*Autobiography*, 13th Book) with startling vividness how

near he came in his own person to this final elimination of the earthquakes of his emotion. We shall cite the famous passage about the actual implement of suicide: “Among a considerable collection of weapons, I possessed a handsome well-sharpened dagger. Every night I laid it beside by bed, and before I put out the candle I would try whether it were possible to thrust the sharp point a couple of inches down into my bosom. But I never could quite succeed and at last I laughed myself out of the notion, flinging away my hypochondriacal specters, and concluding to live.” Still this was not enough, he had not yet saved himself in the only way he could be saved. His salvation must come through his genius which redeems him by the written confession. So the account runs on: “But to be able to accomplish this with the joy of success, I had to bring a poetic problem to fulfilment, in which all that I had felt, thought and dreamed upon this weighty point, should be put into language.” Such is his only course of redemption; ink must flow through his pen, else blood will gush out of his heart. So we may fancy him sharpening his goose-quill with that keen-edged dagger of his instead of plunging it into his bosom.

Let us return, however, to consider some contrasts between *Götz* and *Werther*. The

one celebrates Will, the other Feeling, thus they hinge on two very different elements of the human Self. The full name of the dramatic hero, Götz with the iron hand, suggests rude might, blood and iron, militarism if you please. But the record of the sentimental hero, Werther, proclaims his sufferings upon the title-page, intimating his internal lacera-tions. To us both characters seem typically Teutonic, prophetic of the Germany of to-day, combining crass strength with tender sentimentality. Many a parallel might be drawn between Götz and Bismarck, in their common assault upon the abuses of the old empire, yet dropping back to it finally, and seeking to restore it in the last instance. The ancient medieval system would seem to have been the political ultimate lying back of these two greatest German men of our modern era: the poet and the statesman. Even Faust with all his denials, does not deny the old Imperial Order, but fights for it and indeed wins its victory in the Fourth Act of the Second Part of the drama.

Still further we may draw the lines of distinction: the one is essentially masculine, the other feminine. As works of art, *Götz* is a man, *Werther* is a woman; the two books are to our mind spiritually sexed. Perhaps some-thing of the kind lies in all human produc-

tions: they are dominantly male or female, sharing in the profoundest creative fact of Nature herself, the sexual diremption. On the whole we may say that the drama is male, the novel female. At some future time all original works are going to be classed in that way, with the addition that not a few perhaps will have to be labeled as neuter. So we may say that Goethe the man utters himself in Götz, but Goethe the woman in Werther. And all through his career moves not merely the man Goethe but the woman Goethe, the latter being really the best portion of his genius and inherited from his mother, as he himself often recognized. But now comes the curious contrast and rather the deepest stroke of art in the whole book: the woman is the man as an offset to the man being woman; Lottie is really the bearer of the masculine part of the entire transaction while Werther is more the feminine, if not effeminate. She is never upset by her emotion, but holds steady course mid the vast spume of sentiment surging around her and even over her head; the solid practical German maiden as precise house-keeper, cutting bread and butter for her little sisters and brothers, God bless her! She is prose, but good hearty buxom prose, over against the incalculable poetic effervescence to which she, along with her betrothed in far

less prominence, stands as the bulwark immovable. And that is a vast new experience for our victorious Goethe, now conquered by a simple girl of the folk. But this it is which rouses the Titan in him all the more; the obstacle he lashes against with all the fury of his feelings, but he has to give up and retire.

Werther is a work of wider appeal than *Götz*, which is national, while the former is supra-national, and rises into the realm of universal literature. The modern man with his brooding contortions comes emphatically upon the stage and begets a new expression in a new art form: the psychic novel in which the incidents are internal. Undoubtedly Rousseau had opened this mine in his *Nouvelle Héloïse*, whose flight back to Nature we find re-echoed in Goethe's book. Herein lies another pivotal distinction of *Werther* from *Götz*: the latter is objective in its trend, based upon history, dealing with the actual world of institutions, while the former is subjective largely, showing the deep upheavals of the underself, giving the soul's adventures, a psychic Odyssey whose Ulysses is also in search of "sunny Ithaca and prudent Penelope." The setting of *Götz* is medieval, but that of *Werther* is still most modern in its modernity.

Moreover the people of *Werther* with their

surroundings are all of the simple middle class, having no nobleman nor plebian, while *Götz* takes up every social class, from emperor down to the rabble, all of which adds to the dispersion of its action. This homogeneity of *Werther* gives point to its intensity and unity. Its epistolary form enables it to hit home, sending bullet after bullet to the one spot. This form was not new, Smollett in England and Rousseau in France had famously employed it. But Goethe as letter writer was the greatest that ever lived, his correspondence runs through his whole life and is no small part of his literary output, both as to quantity and quality.

Still there are two parts to *Werther* and both are different. The characters change, though the names are retained in the second part; Lottie is really dethroned by a new lady-love; and Albert the betrothed is strangely transformed. This transition is known to have corresponded with events in Goethe's life at this time. The fact is that *Werther* from first to last spans the entire Frankfort Quadrennium, starting with poet's love for Charlotte Buff; the suicide of the love-lorn youth Jerusalem occurred somewhat later and showed him the tragedy of love as an actual fact. His second sweetheart in the course of the novel was Maxie

Laroche, who was soon married to another man, a grocer by the name of Brentano, and madly jealous of the poet. When Goethe started to writing he says he finished it in a few weeks, but really its composition runs through this whole Epoch. Also he changes his literary bibles from Homer in the first part to Ossian in the second. Still the furious reaction of emotion against the limits of existence is the same in both parts, and the world-pain keeps up flamboyant. There is no mythus or fable, but real life is photographed directly. And he feels a swaying between life and death, which Goethe claims strongly was his own condition at the time, making all existence seem unanchored.

It is noteworthy that to these two early works of Goethe, we can trace two tendencies of the novel. *Götz* was translated by Sir Walter Scott in his young manhood, and must have opened up to the coming novelist the medieval content which is found in so many of his works illustrating more the outer life of man. On the contrary *Werther* can well be deemed the ancestor of the novels of today, which dwell with so much detail on the inner life of the emotional soul. Thus both productions have shown a marvelous creative power. It has been estimated that in the first twenty-five years after *Werther*

more than 6,000 appeared in Germany, indicating what an ocean the author had tapped.

Upon Goethe's later production *Werther* had far more influence than *Götz*, and helped bring forth a line of novels reaching to the poet's last years. We can find its traces in *Meister's Apprenticeship*, and still more decisively in *Elective Affinities*; and it has its kinship with certain parts of *Meister's Travels*, Goethe's last novel. In fact a strain of *Werther* has been noted in a number of Goethe's poems, notably in his *Tasso*. Thus the present work is an ever-active fountain which flows through the whole life-poem of the author. So it may be said that the sorrows of young *Werther* were peculiarly Goethe's own, and remained his own through the lapse of all his years, continuing an incessant source of his literary productivity.

This fact was known and felt deeply by Goethe himself. His last elemental love, that for Ulrika, which also starts the final creative Epoch of his career, was coupled by him with that of *Werther*, which thus may be said to interlink the first and last nodes of his long life-poem through the common bond of the poet's love. The earliest and the latest Phileros thus join hands through *Werther's* woes of passion and round out the cycle of the poet's total activity. (See the

poem called *Trilogy of Passion*, with its opening address to Werther, experienced and written in 1823.)

III.

Titanic Fragments.

Doubtless the most striking manifestation of the explosive character of this Epoch is seen in the mountainous fragments strewn through its four years. In a letter to Herder he figures his Muse as the driver of a team of four wild untamed steeds, rearing, kicking, wrestling with the reins and with one another; still the master if he can, is to bring about that all their "sixteen feet move to one beat toward the goal." The time was an ecstacy of creative power in which he was possessed by what he often calls Nature. "How I long, O Nature, after thee, to feel thy truth and love; thou becomest to me a joyous fountain gushing forth out of a thousand pipes." And this might of Nature is supremely the limit-breaker of the whole finite world: "Thou art what expands this narrow existence of mine to infinity." This elemental view of himself and of his power occurs often in his verse and prose.

Such an illimitable tendency could seldom

produce complete things which after all must be limited. In this mood the poet cannot rightly form, and hence brings forth fragments which will only indicate his "striving for the infinite." Indeed he becomes a fragment too; thus we may conceive Goethe during this Epoch as a Titanic fragment in himself, producing Titanic fragments.

So now we come to look at the colossal torsos of literary plans during this Frankfort Quadrennium, which lie scattered along Goethe's printed page as huge boulders of his volcanic overflow. There is no more amazing exhibition of his enormous natural energy than these irregular broken blocks of great poems which he conceived and threw out in his Titanic spasms. Many of them are unfinished, are indeed unfinishable; but they remain the more impressive witnesses of his original native power. They still show the suddenness of their origin, the prodigious throes of creation, as born directly of Nature herself. Thus they stand in contrast with the two finished products of this Quadrennium, especially *Götz* and *Werther*, which show at least some intentional construction in their organism, made up as they are of vivid jets of this same central energy. The volcano Goethe has left these monstrous lava figures, partial gigantic outlines lying pros-

trate on the ground as if Heaven-defying prodigies pierced by the bolt of Jove. For after all to the poet himself this frenzy of production was tragic, and died away like the very Titan; the mood had its beginning and close in the present Epoch of his career. Hereafter we shall see him passing from this time of all overturning seismic disturbance to a classic sunny repose which will be another stage of his comprehensive life. But now we are to stroll through the field of these significant fragments, and put them together as a phase of our poet's evolution. Let it be said that this phase is to be found in every great writer—some of them never get over it—indeed it has its counterpart more or less distinctly in every individual.

Of these fragmentary remains, we may first note that some are taken from History, some from Fable, and some from Human Nature directly (like *Werther*). To be sure they all go back to the author's personal experience, which took shape in works; they likewise belong to his present utterance of Titanism.

Beginning with the historic figures we note three if not four. We behold Goethe's poetic insight seizing the mighty individualities which stand at the grand nodes of the recorded Past and are the pivotal souls of its

supreme events. Here we place the poet's early attempt to set forth *Socrates*, the Greek epochal thinker who more than any other man forms the transition from a religious to a philosophic world-view, and thus establishes forever the new European discipline of the spirit, namely philosophy, even if there were philosophers before him. Goethe, however, after coddling this favorite theme for some years found that he was not the man to portray in poetry the great philosophic revolution, if indeed it could be deemed a right poetic theme. Another of his plans derived from History was to write a drama of *Julius Caesar*, probably incited by Shakespeare's masterpiece. Thus he would grapple with the character who more than any other is the political turning-point of antiquity, whose colossal form still hovers mistily over Europe and her States-system. But this subject also was not rightly Goethe's, whose bent was not political or world-historical, and so he resigned it, leaving only a few stray rags as he says. But longer and more deeply he worked over his *Mahomet*, central figure primarily of a great religious revolution which also had its far-reaching political side, tearing Asia from Europe, halving Christendom through a new faith and a new government, and starting a fresh period of the World's

History. In his Autobiography (Book 14, toward the end) the poet has indicated what most deeply drew him to the character of Mahomet, who at first "sought to impart the divine idea in himself to his environment. But he collided thereby with the rude world, and in order to win it had to come down and be equal to it, wherein he renounced his lofty excellence." This thought was also wakened in the poet, as usual by living examples before him, which he recounts. Of this Mahomet drama, three fragments remain, most famous of which is the song of the victorious prophet, setting forth the rapid rise of the new doctrine like a small mountain rivulet which takes up all other streams in its course, at first peacefully and then by violence and war's triumph. Years afterward (in 1799) Goethe was still drawn to the same theme and translated Voltaire's drama of Mahomet, though in a very different mood from the present one. The two views of the same great character are worth comparing, as they show two ways of conceiving such men as well as two different stages of Goethe's own life-evolution.

Such are the three dramas, a philosophic, a political, and a religious, conceived during this time (to them perhaps *Egmont* ought to be added, though completed in a different pe-

riod). Vast are the broken disjointed outlines, revealing the poet's desperate stress to utter what surged within him. No little national themes are these, but the outstretch grasps for grandest world-historical events and personages; still the human limit is upon him, the youthful Titan, and he can produce only Herculean torsos. Properly the historic spirit lay not in the field of his highest Genius, and he has specially denied the value of the World's History.

So we may turn to his work in the realm of the Mythus, in which he brought forth the fragment indeed, but also the fulfilment. For Goethe was in the very essence of him mythical, we may call him mythopoeic, a trait which runs through his whole life to its very end, as we may note in the Second Part of *Faust*. He has in a humorous way marked this supreme bent of his Nature as his inborn desire of fabling (*die Lust zu fabuliren*) which he claims to derive from his mother. The mythical substance of the ages was verily his favorite poetic material, as affording him a freer treatment than history, and also as being more cognate with his genius. In general the grand figures of Mythology are more plastic to the touch of the shaping artist than those already shaped by historic events. Accordingly we shall behold him seizing up-

on the legendary heroes of peoples, all showing in one way or other his attitude of revolt against the existent order of their world. In fact Goethe developed the Mythus and in the Mythus as the native element of his poetical creation during his whole life, especially the Greek and Teutonic Mythologies he works over from youth to old-age, reflecting in them all the various stages of his evolution.

In this sphere we shall first place his Titanic *Prometheus*, a dramatic fragment written in 1773, which was followed about a year later by a rhythmic monologue put into the mouth of the same defiant Titan who expresses his contempt for the Gods, and lays stress upon his work of forming men like himself, "to suffer, to weep, and to rejoice, and to care not for thee, O Zeus, as I do not." Such was the Titan Prometheus, the original man-shaper against the Gods, voicing the Titan Goethe who also has been shaping men in his writ during this Epoch, hostile to the existent order. Already the poet has compared Shakespeare to Prometheus as maker of men, "breathing into them the breath of his Genius." But years before Goethe the English Shaftsbury had said: "The poet is a second creator, a Prometheus under a Jupiter." So the Promethean idea lay already in the time, and at the Goethean home in

Frankfort there was the revolt of the son as creative Prometheus against the father as wielder of transmitted authority. This Promethean man is indeed made mortal, but his death is to be enacted as his final transfiguration. In an exalted passage of the dramatic fragment, Prometheus describes man's rising through ecstasy till he embraces a world, becoming one with the All: "then the man dies." So the poet casts an image of himself as Titan at this time in the old legend, which by the way kept haunting him long afterwards, and will insist upon a new utterance in his much later drama called *Pandora*.

Next we are to observe Goethe passing from an Hellenic to a Semitic mythical theme, to the *Wandering Jew*. Of this composition, a narrative poem in doggerel verse, there remain a number of disjointed tatters large and small. In his Autobiography (15th Book) the poet tells quite fully his plan, which does not agree very well with this poem written many years before. Ahasverus, the Jewish shoemaker, meets with the cross-bearing Christ and through a kind of curse is made to start on his wanderings. The Titanic element of the poet is seen in the scoffing attacks upon the established religion of Christianity, especially upon the clergy who are represented in striking contrast with

Christ himself. The mocking burlesque tone jars with the earnestness of the theme. There is no wonder that Goethe never completed it, and suppressed it from print for many years, and first published it as a sample of his former self long since transcended. Really Christ is more the leading figure of the poem than Ahasverus, and he is made to voice the main satirical outbursts against the religion bearing his own name and life-stamp.

Not much is said of the wanderings of Ahasverus, which would seem to be the main content of the *Mythus*. Incidentally Goethe drops the remark that he intended to bring the two Jews, mythical and historical, together for a mutual interview, Ahasverus and Spinoza. This suggestive legend remained long in Goethe's soul; during his Italian Journey, he speaks of it again as one of the subjects of his creative brooding. But he never finished the fragment, for which he gives a rather unreasonable reason.

The American reader of today ponders why the great poet could not work out to a completed product these two supreme mythical figures adumbrating peoples and ages—*Prometheus* and the *Wandering Jew*. The fact would seem to reach to the deepest movement of the World's History. The European consciousness has never been able to unchain

the fettered *Prometheus*, despite the hundreds of attempts by its writers, and has never been able to bring home the homeless Jew, to stop him from his wanderings, though many a poet and novelist have tried their pen-driving hands. In our opinion it requires a new social and political order, which always lies back of and determines every epoch-turning literary masterpiece. Very suggestive is it, therefore, that Europe's greatest poet and myth-transformer has left these two mightiest mythical deposits of the old world in fragmentary ruins.

So these enormous Titanic plans have come down to us unfulfilled, hardly more than signs of the poet's super-human aspiration. We may well ask for the deeper reason why he could not bring to fruition such vast designs. After all, they appealed only to one side of his nature; they did not engage the whole man, still less the whole poet. They were a vent for his Titanic protest against the social order of the time, but not for his love, the deepest current of his being. Phile-ros has no part in the five mentioned torsos, magnificent as may be their conception. The Titan as such seemed not to share in the soul of love. So Goethe dropped him, had to drop him as inadequate to his profoundest self-expression.

Now the curious fact rises to the surface that there was one of these Titanic fragments of the present Epoch which Goethe did complete, though he took his whole life for the work. This was his *Faust*, which also burst forth during the Frankfort Quadrennium. But it had also the element of love represented in Margaret as well as the element of Titanism represented in the hero Faust. Phileros, therefore, finds his deepest utterance in this work; indeed his part is its chief attraction today. Hence the loveless Titanic fragments stayed as they were first erupted by the poet in his volcanic convulsions. To him in later life they simply appeared like the rude outbursts of a former geologic era. But his *Faust* became his darling for life, and so we may look at it separately in its early shape.

IV.

Faust.

There is no intention here of giving an account of the completed *Faust*; merely we would mark its first appearance during the present creative tension of the poet. It will rise repeatedly to the surface in the course of

this narrative. Indeed of all Goethe's single poems, *Faust* has the best claim for representing his life-poem; still it is not his life-poem by any means, which must include in its sweep all his works, and whose theme is his total achievement.

So there is one Mythus, that of *Faust*, which Goethe, wrestling over during this genetic Quadrennium, was destined to complete, but only after he had poured into it his whole life. We may suppose that this Teutonic Mythus was closer to him than Hellenic Prometheus, or Semitic Ahasverus. Some years ago the early *Faust*, known as the *Urfaust* was discovered, though we cannot tell how much of it was written at Frankfort and how much of it later at Weimar. Indeed some bits seem to have been composed when the poet was only twenty years old, according to his own statement, which would throw its start back to 1769. And the legend of *Faust* was known to Goethe's childhood through puppet-play and folk-book, and possibly through his mother's gift of story-telling. At any rate the theme of *Faust* saturated his whole life, quite from infancy to his last pen-stroke.

There is evidence, however, that during his Frankfort upburst of creativity, he was deeply occupied with a *Faust* drama, which

expressed one phase of his Titanism, his revolt against the limit of man's knowledge. But there was now made an addition which belongs peculiarly to this epoch: the story of Margaret which he never could have written except for his experience with Frederika. Thus he conjoins to Faust the simple country-maiden, and puts into his drama again the confession of his own guilty deed, portraying it with an intensity and pathos which he never attained afterwards. As already indicated, literature was his way of passing through the process of atonement. The poignancy of his own conscience he threw out into that of his characters. You may hear Goethe's own anguish in Margaret's soul-riven outcries at the Cathedral or before the *Mater Dolorosa*. It would kill him unless he could get it out of himself through a proportionately intense utterance. His art was his final relief, giving him shrift and absolution. Thus his expiation is not merely individual but becomes universal, not alone for himself but for all and for all time, through the word of the genius who, however, has to suffer what he writes and before he writes.

In the Frankfort Epoch, then, he clapped together the Faust mythus and the Margaret story. Still there was a great chasm between these two ingredients of the drama, quite

dividing it in twain. In the Urfaust which doubtless belongs on the whole to this time, we feel the deep separation which destroys unity. But the poet must have felt far down in his creative instinct that the two elements belong together, that they are at their deepest point integrating members of one great theme, though he cannot as yet raise their connecting link to light. This is the problem which occupies Goethe for many a year till at last we see its solution in the completed First Part of *Faust*, after full forty suns had ripened his early conception. He must unfold Mephistopheles as the destroyer of Margaret's world, evolving him out of Faust's primal negation.

Two more dramas of atonement he wrote during this epoch for his self-torturing transgression against Frederika. He could not get over it, remorse would soon steal back upon him even after he had done penance and said shrift in agonized writing. The result was that in no less than five dramas he portrays the self-reproach and punishment of the faithless lover; it was just the point in them all on which his genius spent itself with the greatest energy. Says he: "The answer of Frederika to my letter announcing my departure rent my heart," and this lacerated organ of his would not heal. "I was guilty,

I had wounded in its last depths a beautiful heart," says he, and his own heart had received as deep a thrust as hers, and kept bleeding. One temporary alleviation he could find; let us hear him tell it again in his Autobiography (Book 12th): "But when the anguish over Frederika kept wrenching me, I once more after my old fashion sought relief through poetry. I continued my accustomed confession by writing it out in works that I might become worthy of an inner absolution through this self-inflicted expiation. The two Marias in *Götz* and *Clavigo* and the two detestable characters who are their lovers may well be considered as results of my repentance." Such at least was his way of reparation. Thus from his first drama *Götz* (1771) to *Clavigo* (1774), and also through his *Stella* (1775), streams an ever-surging current of volcanic contrition for love's violation. The two mentioned dramas, *Clavigo* and *Stella*, are slighter performances, very rapidly composed, but still strongly emphasizing the one innermost theme of this time, heart's sorrow for guilt and the immediate relief through literary utterance. But the self-stabbed wound never was healed, he will carry it in him through life, with recurrent paroxysms.

Thus two main strands, his outer Titanic

revolt and his inner Titanic tribulation for sin weave through this Frankfort Quadrennium, working often together, yet often in separation. But what an astounding productivity! It seems as if the whole age pushed to voice itself through this one puny individual, and would tear him to pieces in its rush for utterance. Besides these five completed works (if we include the *Urfaust*) and the colossal fragments of great enterprises already recounted, he wrote numerous newspaper notices, chiefly criticism. Also many letters and many lyrics which show the same ebullience of the world-stormer as elsewhere. Also quite a list of dramatic skits, farces, spiteful burlesques taking off individuals whom he knew, such as Wieland and Herder. One may well wonder how he survived it all. Especially in these smaller pieces Mephistopheles begins to peep out as the scoffing clown of the world-order, or as he appears later, God's court-fool.

Truly Goethe's genetic Quadrennium it is in which his whole literary career starts to germinating. Here the fact may be mentioned that the primal conception of *Wilhelm Meister*, which unfolds through Goethe's entire life, has been found in this Frankfort Epoch. Thus we may see his first drama and his first novel, *Götz* and *Werther*, made uni-

versal in his two supreme life-works, the drama *Faust* and the novel *Meister*, written counterparts of his total selfhood, whereof something is to be said hereafter. We regard him in the enormous strength and multiplicity of his present literary utterance, as a greater hero than any of his heroes, especially in his two leading roles, the Titan of revolt and the Titan of expiation.

But there is one more act to be recounted of this quadrennial drama of the poet, and that not the least memorable and provocative of the Muse.

V.

Lili.

Such is the liquid name of the new young lady who gets intertwined in Goethe's already complex love-life during the last year of his stay at Frankfort. Phileros yields to the tender enthrallment of his emotion, and proceeds one step further than he has ever yet gone: he actually becomes betrothed to the object of his affection, which has not happened before; and thus he is fettered by a new chain in which custom or convention or duty holds him fixed. How will the Titan like that, after his free boundless ranging?

Soon he begins to feel the restraint and we see him rattling at these fresh gyves with many a sign of impatience if not of wrath. He has never before been held in the bond of a trothplight, with its obligation and even sacredness. Such is the new conflict in which our daring lover has become involved.

Thus the two sides of the man meet in a renewed desperate fray. Or we may fable the matter thus: Phileros and the Titan, already having tested each other in many a struggle, now come to their deepest collision. The one is gentle and yielding and especially delights in the service of love, but the other is defiant of the tender sentiment and refuses all service as hostile to freedom. Thus Goethe, at the close of the present Epoch, is to experience just about the hardest inner battle of his life between the two strongest elemental powers of his nature.

It may be here preluded that Goethe is driven out of Frankfort primarily by the scourge of this new passion and its vengeful backstroke. Yes, here he descends again, the insatiable Love-God, the poet's dearest Olympian comrade through life, yet also his severest punisher. Let us hear him describe the divine epiphany which turns a new page of his heart's never-ending history. "A friend invited me to go with him to a little

concert to be given at the house of an eminent business man. As I liked to do everything on the spur of the moment, though it was late, I went with him. We entered the spacious sitting room with a large company around the piano at which the only daughter of the house took her seat and played with remarkable facility and grace. I stood near enough to observe her form and bearing. After the playing was over I observed her watch me closely. Thus we slyly eyed each other, and I do not deny that the tenderest sort of attractive power began to steal into my heart. On taking my leave the mother gave me to understand that another visit would be agreeable, to which invitation the daughter responded with friendly alacrity. I did not fail to repeat my call at proper intervals."

Thus Goethe gets to know on New Year's Day, 1775, Lili Schönemann, daughter of a prominent banker, deceased, whose widow kept up the business and the home. Beautiful, divine appearance of a maid not yet seventeen years old by half a year, yet level-headed, trained to social life of which her home was quite a center, especially for the moneyed aristocracy of Frankfort. Then follows the sweet toying of tender souls, wreathed in the present case with all the flowers of music and poetry. But just think

of it! This young girl has completely netted in her chain the bond-breaking Titan, now the most famous man in Frankfort, and the first author in Germany. She must have read his *Werther*, or if she has not, she certainly does it now, and her mother reads it too, one may conceive the very next day. Both of course identify the hero of that novel easily, nor can they help making the secret reflection that the lover does not now need to kill himself because his sweetheart is betrothed to another. No such obstacle is in sight, still the sailing is not smooth. The two families belong to different and somewhat antagonistic sets of the Frankfort community; father Goethe, of the ancient patriciate and of the Lutheran confession, does not like this quite recent moneyed aristocracy with its display and pretence, and with its Calvanism in religion. Still the deft match-maker appears and harmonizes the discords, so that the betrothal becomes a fact.

What! the untamed Goethe actually noosed! He who was nicknamed the Bear, and even wild Indian, in his desperate return to Nature! Hear his comment: "It was a strange decree of overruling Providence that in the course of my singular life, I should also have experienced the feelings of one who is betrothed." Then he moralizes upon the sit-

uation with some satisfaction, but soon begins to feel the new restraint. The Prometheus in him rattles his fresh-forged fetters and starts to lurching on this side and that to the infinite unhappiness of the young lady and of himself. He gets an awful disgust at the social formalities of the Schönemann household, at the utterly common-place people who visit there, with nothing to say except business; mad fits of jealousy overwhelm him at the sight of his Lili lavishing her sweetest smiles and blandishments, which belonged to him only, on a lot of socially important nobodies who had some money. In one of these moods he gives vent to his bitterly humorous burlesque called *Lili's Menagerie*. Artificiality, stiffness, fashion's servility made the caged Bear roar, or rather made the trammeled Titan curse anew the Gods in grim defiance.

So the battle rages up and down for some months, but the outcome is an easy prophecy. The captive breaks loose and takes to flight, making for the mountains of Switzerland, Nature's mighty upheaval in the heart of Europe, where he may find sympathy in the gigantic Heaven-storming landscape of Alpine summits. He reaches the top of St. Gotthard, whence he peers down into plains of Italy, in which classic land of art his fa-

ther wished him to take a journey. But with that one outlook he turns back homewards, the Genius bids him wait as he is not yet ready for the Italian Journey; he has still a German discipline to undergo. Not till a dozen years more have passed over him, and he has had the training of a wholly new Epoch of life at Weimar, will he feel himself driven to descend the other side of the Alps. Still there is no doubt that the immediate force which whirled him about was his love for Lili. That bond still fettered him, the engagement was not yet broken, the problem was unsolved. So he wends his way back to Frankfort.

Goethe has again set down in a drama the confession of his peculiar inner condition. He was now a man with two loves in his heart, and two devoted women as their representatives. This is the general situation in the play called *Stella*, written in the Spring of 1775, when his passion for Lili was urging and scourging him at its topmost. For the affair of Frederika still tossed mightily his soul, and he had lashed the tempest in his memory to yet more violent paroxysms through the recent composition of *Clavigo* and of *Faust*. Both these dramas have stormy echoes of the Sessenheim episode, set forth in the two female characters respec-

tively, Marie and Margaret, each of deepest fidelity in contrast with the faithless lover. Thus the poet gibbets himself in writ, but saves his own skin in fact. And behold now an additional betrayal of love, seemingly in the midst of his hottest repentance for his guilt toward Frederika. In this frame of mind he composes his *Stella*, the drama of the double lover, Fernando, who is just about the most contemptible piece of a manikin that ever spouted forth his meanness on the stage. So Goethe thought of himself for we have to take him here as self-portraying. It is noteworthy that in his Swiss trip he visited Strassburg twice, both going and coming, where the all-dominant fact filling his recollection must have been the real drama of Frederika. But at the same time Lili would fit across the scene—the high-toned, elegant society girl, coupled with the simple country maid in a sort of rivalry round the poet, who in his written play reconciles them both in the common love for himself. For each of the women, Cecilia and Stella, takes one of his hands and one of his cheeks, the last words of the drama being “we are thine.” It should be noted that Goethe long afterwards in a very different mood changed this early ending and made it tragic, spoiling it as a document of his own psychological evolution.

From Goethe's telling description of Lili in his Autobiography, we get a high notion of her personal worth and especially of her own courage. When her own family and all her social set were seeking to separate her from her lover, she defied the whole opposition and offered to flee with him to distant America which was then in the throes of its own Revolution. We have to think (though he does not put the matter in this way) that she dared him to the flight, and he backed down and ran off in the other direction. No wonder that he paints himself so often with contempt, with even baseness, from Weislingen to Fernando, and in sharp antithesis glorifies his women. Soon, however, Lili herself becomes convinced of the impossibility of a strong union of hearts with such a weak-hearted Titan. The bond drooped, then dropped asunder when the stormy unbridled poet quits Frankfort and sets out for Weimar, where he awaits a fresh stage of his apprenticeship.

He had already been approached by the young Duke Karl August, and he undoubtedly feels that he must take a new step in life. The Frankfort Epoch has definitely closed with a kind of crash. He begins to feel that his Titanism has run its course against the social order, with which in some way he must

become better acquainted and if possible reconciled. He sees that the Titan is tragic, and he as writer has shown him such in a literary way. The idea of an official position under some prince was at first repugnant to him as it ran counter "to my instinct of personal freedom." Then his father, the proud patrician of the free city of Frankfort, was averse to such service for his son. But there was no other course to get into the established life of society. In one of his later letters of this present Epoch he indicates that he feels his dawning limit, when "I have learned political subordination." Where was he to take such a lesson? Gradually he chose the court of Weimar as the school of his coming discipline.

Thus the Epoch of Goethe's life-poem which we call the Frankfort Quadrennium winds up in a flight from his native city, which separation is not only local but spiritual. The peculiar manifestation which characterized these four volcanic years has reached its cessation. That which we have named his Titanism drops into the background of his life and writing. The volcano has spent its fury, has indeed erupted itself. But its results will never be lost, its products will occupy the poet during the rest of his days. It was essentially the elemental cre-

ative Epoch of his whole career, as so often stated already.

In our opinion his break with Lili was practically his last Titanic act, which defied the instituted order of love and betrothal culminating in marriage and the established family. Then he had to flee from his home and his deed. But his chief separation was from his state of revolt against the transmitted institutions of his race, or his flight from his Titanism and its Epoch. He will hereafter have resurgences of this Titanic spirit, but as a stage of his life-poem it is over.

But Phileros survives and goes with his genius to Weimar where he will have another sort of career. For love, as already said, is the deepest fact of Goethe's existence, and cannot be torn out of him by the harshest wrenches of fate. But along with love, a new discipline at Weimar presents itself whose portrayal we have now reached.

CHAPTER THIRD.

THE WEIMAR DECENTNIUM.

Another Epoch of the poet's career has arrived, distinct from the foregoing one, and in certain essential points quite the opposite. From being a free ranger, as he was practically during the previous four years at Frankfort, he becomes a government official bound to place and to a certain fixed routine of work. Thus he is tethered, even if he still enjoys many a limited freedom. He has to fit himself into a pre-established order, and also to help administer the same in his new calling.

It is evident that the chief training here is institutional subordination, against which he has been hitherto recalcitrant. Thus he is sent to school to learn through experience the meaning and value of institutions of which he in his previous tendency had been not simply ignorant but defiant. The transmitted system of society to which he has shown no little antipathy, he is at present required to maintain and to conduct successfully to its goal. This means the making of a great turn in the round of his life. He is to conserve, not to tear down. In this regard the coming Wei-

mar Epoch is quite the reverse of the preceding Frankfort Epoch.

Still we are to observe that Goethe evolves and improves the various governmental departments of which he becomes the chief minister. He recognizes the abuses and corrects them; on certain lines he develops the better organization out of the past antiquated forms. But the great fact which interests us and makes the present time a turning-point of his total achievement is that he gets acquainted with the instituted world at first hand, and contributes to establish it, yea to transform it into a higher stage of itself.

The importance of this new experience upon his future literary activity is manifest. The Titan is converted to the social order which he wished to overthrow; the revolutionist turns to the preserver. After his Weimar discipline, Goethe can never again drop back into his Frankfort attitude. He has yet much to write before his eyes close for the last time, but his work will show that he has passed through the present Epoch of institutional training.

As indicated by the title of the chapter, this social schooling of the poet will last some ten years, which seems a long time. Perhaps it might have been made shorter; still he had to drain the cup dry, and feel that it was dry

for him; that is, he must find the limits of the present Epoch also, and at last break over them into a still higher stage. Thus Goethe manifests the ever-developing spirit which unfolds from one state of excellence to another in the ceaseless sweep toward its highest fulfilment. He will learn the lesson of this long Decennium through direct practice of its duties.

Hence he will have little time or opportunity for great literary works; indeed the mood to make such long-continued and stressful efforts will be quite wanting, even if he sometimes chafes at the small written output of his brain. In fact, the most striking contrast with the preceding Frankfort Epoch is the nearly total quiescence of his productive Genius at present in the Weimar Epoch; the change was so overwhelming that it struck him almost dumb for a decade. Still we hold that he was at work, doing what was necessary to make the grand totality which we call Goethe. The psychological import of these ten years of his Muse's brooding silence must be integrated with the poet's evolution.

But the deepest strain of the poet's character, that of love, will not be quiescent during this quiescent Epoch. Phileros also goes to Weimar, and is active there in his own way, playing a unique part in his life's his-

tory, of which an account will be given later. Indeed love will stir the poet to be creative in this otherwise uncreative time, and will stimulate him to a work which has its significant place not only in his life-poem, but also in literature generally (his letters to Frau Von Stein).

We designated the Frankfort Epoch as anti-prescriptive, hostile to everything in the form of transmitted authority, and reacting against the prescribed forms of education which were imposed upon the poet during his youth. But at Weimar Goethe as official has to accept prescription and indeed to enforce it, vindicating it in practice. Thus we may regard this third Epoch of his Pre-Italian Period as a return to the principle of his first Epoch, and thereby forming a rounded whole, which characterizes the Period. Hence he not only has to receive prescription, from the outside, as he did at first, but he has to re-make it as a part of himself and of his present vocation. Herein we may observe the psychical process, which will also be manifested in Goethe's entire career, and which will constitute the inner organisation of his life-poem.

Accordingly we may well emphasize in word and thought the transition from Frankfort to Weimar as truly epochal in the poet's

experience. As already indicated, it lasts some ten years and more if we date it exactly as lying between Goethe's first arrival at Weimar, November 1775, and his departure from Carlsbad for Italy September, 1786. But he was unsettled about his stay at Weimar for some months, and in spirit he had set out for Italy a good while before he actually started. Accordingly we shall name it the Weimar Ten Years of official service, or distinctively the Weimar Decennium. So Goethe himself has measured it, looking back at it from Rome: "Than my life during the last ten years I would rather wish me death." Thus we mark the boundaries of this Epoch between his two flights: from Frankfort to Weimar, and then from Weimar to Italy. And long afterwards the old poet praised a French critic (Ampére) who had specially designated this Epoch: "How correct is his observation that I in *the first ten years* of my Weimar life produced as good as nothing, and that despair drove me to Italy."

There is no doubt that the deepest strain in him was his creative poetic impulse. But that had delivered its first message, and he was aware of it. It was impossible for him to go on writing *Werthers* and *Götzes*, as some German biographers hold that he ought

to have done. That work had been wrought out to a finish, and his two last dramas of the Frankfort time are repetitions, quite dispensable, very inferior to his other workmanship, and he knew it. His Titanism had uttered itself at its highest flood, and his expression of it remains lasting, indeed typical. But what step was he to take next in spiritual evolution? His genius or his guardian spirit was correct in sending him to Weimar for a new dip in the world-order, for such it was. So it was a necessary part of his life as a whole, as a completed work.

Undoubtedly the prime physical necessity of existence lay heavy upon him, he had to earn his living. His literary work though popular brought to him no adequate income; his father was growing more querulous and more stingy; his tried law practice was odious to him and not remunerative. Weimar had to train him to a vocation, to become a member of the social Whole by some sort of social service for which society would give him a compensation. Thus he is to be harnessed to a vocational routine for his own new good—the recalcitrant Titan who had rebelled against all order must be put into harness and made to pull in harmony with the Gods. The first fate of man—food, raiment and shelter—he is forced to grapple

with at Weimar and to conquer. But the reward, yea the experience is supremely significant: he wins through himself his economic freedom, the primal one and basis of all other kinds of freedom. Let it also be noted that he now acquires first-hand knowledge of the socio-economic institution, which plays a most important role in his later works—see *Meister*, and the Second Part of *Faust*. In this lies the first subjection of the Titan to an institutional order, which is his special discipline at Weimar. And here we may likewise touch upon the fact that Goethe at Weimar gets into the employment of the State, the political Institution, very different from the economic just considered. He is to help administer that system against which he had protested; indeed he soon rises to be chief officer of the Commonwealth, the most active, the most far-seeing and talented. It is an absolute rule, that of the Duke, which he represents and rigidly upholds; he is now in the service of an imperial power not unlike that against which his Götz had revolted. Here then lies the essential part of Goethe's new discipline: he must realize both in his practice and in his thought that institutional world which previously he had made his hero assail. Still Götz in the drama was tragic;

we see that the poet is now reaching back to that power against which his Götz dashed himself to pieces. Thus the Titan is getting reformed and transformed, but it will take him a good while, ten years indeed of severe schooling, which has its drawback in the almost total cessation of his literary creativity. But his one supreme task is to de-Titanize himself in preparation for the greater work which is to come.

Nevertheless there is a strain of discontent, a secret feeling of mal-adjustment running through this Epoch, especially in the latter part of it. Goethe felt that he had another call than his present one; after all he was not in his right place as minister of State. His true function in life was to be poet, and he could not be permanently happy in pursuing a different vocation. His spare moments only could now be given to the deepest necessity of his being, which was literary creation; his Genius could not be satisfied except by the living sacrifice of his whole best self to its goal. Hence his strongest aspiration and his daily routine of work were at odds; thus there was a jar in his life during this Decennium, and especially during the last half of it, which often was hopelessly painful. He was not fulfilling his mission, he was not delivering the high message which he had

been sent to proclaim. The son of the God had sold himself to perform all the petty labors of mortality, in which his divinity was quenched.

This discontent took chiefly the shape of longing for Italy and for the classic world. He tells us that he could not look at a Latin book without twinges of pain. He speaks of "the physico-moral ills" which at last made the Italian Journey a necessity for his soul's health. Thus he reached a state of revolt against Weimar as he did against Frankfort, and had to move forth into a new plane of his development. So at last his institutional training completed itself, which will not be lost, and his aspiring Genius, long smothered in the petty routine of a petty Court, takes flight across the Alps to win fresh life and freedom.

It should be noted that his Autobiography stops short at the start of the Weimar Decennium. Hence we have no direct record of this Epoch from the poet's pen, as we have so fully of the two preceding Epochs. Of course he had nothing much to tell about in the field of literature, since his Genius had fallen into a state of subsidence during the whole decade. Nor does he seem inclined to dwell upon the real discipline which he received from his long immersion in the business of the State.

I.

Little Weimar.

The explosive, limit-breaking Titan has now to creep into a little hole of a city and country, and to adjust himself to such narrow conditions. At the time of Goethe's arrival, the city Weimar had about 6,000 inhabitants and the entire dukedom of Weimar-Eisenach contained perhaps 100,000 people. The land was poor, hilly, rocky, not dissimilar to New England; moreover the territory was curiously scattered about over a good deal of space, as if strewn in streaks and spots. It was not huddled around one capital, which the people could easily reach and support. So it came that Weimar, the seat of government, was small and poor and helpless; if the Muse were in search of money or even a good living, that would be just the last spot in all Germany where she would alight. To Goethe very shuddering must have been the contrast with his Frankfort which had wealth, business activity, rich surrounding country, and fine edifices. The best house in Weimar, the ducal palace, lay in ruins, having burnt down recently. Still his Genius bids the young poet to shrink himself into this petty bottle, and there to ex-

pand it and himself into the Universe. Did he do it? If he had not, we would not be reading him and talking of him today on the opposite side of the globe, in another hemisphere.

Already there had been the tendency to gather the children of the Muses in Weimar, especially by the former Duchess, Anna Amalia, who secured Wieland, a great literary light of that time, and other smaller ones, not mentionable here. The reigning Duke, her son Karl August, showed the same bent and did the one supreme deed in this line by catching Goethe, and so to speak impounding him, the wild fence-breaker. Then Goethe in his turn develops this same trend marvelously, through his conscious effort, as well as through his unweeting personal magneticism. He had not been in Weimar long and was hardly yet firm in the saddle when he began to stir the Duke to call Herder to be the first clergyman of the land and guardian of the State's religion. For Goethe well remembered Herder at Strassburg as the magician who had evoked the power of his sleeping Genius, and had led him into the creations of his Frankfort epoch. Naturally the poet thought that some such deed could be done again at Weimar. But really Herder had then imparted to his spiritual pupil the one really pivotal lesson which he was able to

give; already Goethe had outgrown him and was in a new stage of development. The result was that the old relation could not be repeated; at Strassburg for once it had been and for all. Still Herder was a man of great talent in his line, and he filled an important, though subordinate place on the Weimar Parnassus. Seeing this and fully satisfied of his supremacy, he grew discontented and lived his life in the mood of the sulking hero. Moreover he passed into a state of mental crystallization; he did not evolve, and could not understand Goethe's stages of evolution, except the first in which he was the chief mediating factor, the new soul's very obstetrician. Hence he, coddled by wife, became the towering example of the unappreciated genius among the Weimar mountain peaks. Goethe took untold trouble in satisfying his just claims, as well as in soothing his ever-ruffled temper, which would easily quill itself like the fretful porcupine. And that wife of his, Caroline, sharp-witted and sharper-tongued, Goethe seems to have actually feared when she would sheer off into her tantrums, and start up her cannonade of grievances. Still Herder had the remnant of good sense to stick to his place, for he was a greater man under Goethe's wing than he could have been anywhere else.

So our greatest Genius gathers his group of geniuses, big and little, troublesome, jealous, and of course not one of them fully appreciated. Still they remained circling about the central sun, and receiving its light; they constitute a unique system, gazed at today in the literary Heaven.

But there was one set of these sons of the Muses whom Goethe could no longer endure. They were his old boon comrades of the Storm and Stress, defiant of all conventions and of the world ordered. Seemingly they expected to have another time of poetic debauchery under their former leader and supreme reveler. But great is their disappointment. Goethe has begun to transcend that stage of himself which now is getting to be to him downright repulsive. The Brothers Stolberg pass through Weimar on their return from Switzerland, apparently for another frolic with the former grandmaster; but they soon leave. Then unaccountable Lenz appears with his monkey tricks and violates all propriety; whereat Goethe sends him off with a sticking epithet of "jackass." Still another of the same ilk, by the name of Klinger enters, but makes quick exit. Thus we may watch Goethe looking at the picture of his former Self, and dashing it to pieces. For these boisterous youths simply showed him

what he had been, and that was enough; he was getting conscious of his transition from Frankfort to Weimar and its significance.

Thus our poet, now turned statesman, is seeking to make his little state a work of art, to render it a perfect thing of its kind; small though it be, yea the smallest, it can image the all. That is the reason, we conceive, why Goethe's artistic instinct rightly turned him away from a large city or country—from Berlin, Leipzig, even from his own Frankfort, which he knew he could not transform into the world beautiful, the material was too refractory and overwhelming. But little Weimar he could handle and mould to shape, inner if not outer, by the co-operation of its absolute sovereign. So in that wee nest on the wee Ilm, he could lay the cosmic germ which would reflect the Universe.

Hence today we are looking back at Weimar pedestaled in its center with Goethe, as a great original work of art. We think of it along with Athens in the age of Pericles, with Florence in her bloom. No other city of Europe during that time rouses the same interest. To be sure Weimar never had any great works of architecture, sculpture, painting, any magnificence. The outer vesture of it was poverty-stricken, almost shabby and tattered, and, though much improved it still

is not dazzling today. But that magic structure of its inner life, spanned by Goethe's days and their works, is what we are to behold and to commune with. A strange immortality it has conferred on a crowd of people totally insignificant, and doomed of themselves to nameless perdition; but they lived and moved about in some petty corner of this communal edifice and so partake of its eternal transfiguration. What a lot of immortal nobodies we have to meet with and to know in the itinerary of Goethe's life! The commonest clay his Promethean touch seems to transmute into little Gods and Goddesses ever-living. So we wander through this Goethe gallery of temporary men and women who have been tranced by the poet's spell into a deathless presence. Really all Weimar is Goethe's poem, which in some respects is his most unique achievement. Dante did no such thing with his Florence though he has rescued the name of many a petty sinner from the fire of oblivion through his Hell-fire.

Accordingly we have to weigh carefully the thought that Goethe when he settled down at Weimar could not help making it over into one of his poetical works, which indeed he wrought at as long as he lived. Thus it has its parallelism with his *Faust*, also a life-long work, which ended when he ended. In like

manner his whole career is to be regarded; not any single poem of his is the best, but his total life-poem. Of this life-poem his biography is essentially an interpretation. A vast multiplicity of human activities he showed, seemingly scattering himself to the four points of the compass; but in them all he was at last doing the one thing: girdling his world in one all-embracing life-poem, whose unity must be seen amid its many diversities. Weimar then was a single long poem of his, the communal one, built not of verses but of actions.

We should also note that a second small urban community lay only a few miles distant from Weimar, having nearly as many inhabitants but possessed of its own central institution, not political but educational. This was Jena with its University which at this time was attended by some 600 students. In a number of points it was antipodal to Weimar, yet each mutually integrated the other. The University was naturally the home of erudition and investigation, while in the Temple of the Muses originality was the divine token, especially literary. Goethe cherished both, was the zealous supporter of both, and took up both into his life and writ. Still Jena was remarkably fertile in movements which Goethe did not care for personally.

Philosophy was not to his liking, yet at Jena under his sway the three supreme philosophers after Kant of modern Germany, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel were professors. The brothers Schlegel originated there the famous Romantic movement, of which both Novalis and Tieck drank at Jena, but which the classic Goethe always shunned as repugnant to the right view of Art. Still its vogue he recognized, and followed to its depths without its excesses, so that he became the greatest romanticist of them all.

Such was the real objective work of the poet during the present Decenium, we may call it his work of art, which we still ideally contemplate in wonder. Perhaps we can account for his lack of written poetry through his pre-occupation with this one real poem, of which he is not only author but hero. For Weimar transformed becomes his great poetic work of this Epoch, and so he could write none other. Undoubtedly he was building in himself anew the transmitted order of the little State, but at the same time he rebuilt the social world there, as a kind of ideal which we study in its little details, otherwise insignificant, and seek to fathom and make our own.

Goethe like every true poet is a symbol-maker essentially, filling every particular

which he touches with a universal content, with a gleam of the All. Not only in his writings but likewise in his deeds we trace his symbolic power. He could not help acting symbols, so that there is a poetry in his life as well as in his word; in fact the two are necessary counterparts, and belong together. So it can well be said that Goethe transfigured Weimar into a symbol, elevating the little unimportant speck to an universal interest and worth seemingly for all time. Thus it comes that he put such stress upon the symbol especially in his older days, feeling it to express the very essence of his Genius. Moreover we may here add that not only his written but also his acted works constitute the total poem of his life, which is to be conceived and set forth as one vast symbol whereby he as individual Self becomes the image and as it were the incarnation of the All-Self. In other words his particular biography is to be grasped as a symbol in which is seen the soul of all biography, and thus images Universal Biography, which we have already characterized in its deepest sense as the Biography of the Universe. For to our mind this Universe is not merely dead matter or blind force, or even unconscious life, though it has all these too, but a conscious Self in its full entirety.

II.

Little Weimar's Ruler.

With the small sovereign there is the same problem as with the small realm: can he, diminutive as he is among the throngs of German princes, be made the bearer of the true greatness of the ruler? Goethe himself calls him small in an oft-cited epigram: "Among Germany's rulers mine is certainly small," whereupon follows a neatly-turned compliment to his Duke. In other words Karl August, a mere unformed stripling of eighteen when the poet arrived at Weimar was to be moulded by him into the sovereign as a work of art. Goethe trained him and kept him under training, yet with subtle tact and unfailing affection. The teacher concealed deftly his schooling, he would yield to his pupil in unnecessary matters and go along with him in certain sports which shocked the staid etiquette of the old Weimarians; but at the critical moment he spared not the lesson, usually with effect. To be sure the pupil sometimes gave a squirm, and called his teacher "an old tyrant," but always with gratitude for his tyranny.

Thus by a unique educative process which we can trace in their mutual dealings and correspondence, the poet helped to mould the life

of the ruler into a work of art which we also contemplate with admiration in this Weimar Gallery. And it may be added that Goethe shared in the new educational tendency of the time; he lived in the age of the greatest modern educators, Pestalozzi and Froebel, and breathed their atmosphere, not to speak of lesser lights like Basedow, of whom he has given a lively whimsical account. Indeed his *Wilhelm Meister* turns mainly on an educational problem, and in the second part of this novel he has described an ideal school in what he calls the Pedagogic Province. But we come back to the fact that his greatest work in this sphere was the transformation of his ruler's life-rule into a poem, in which the small reflects the all.

Still Karl August was not merely clay in the hands of the potter; he had a strong character, a born love of the ever-better, and a princely magnanimity; yet his supreme talent as absolute Prince lay in his capacity to take such a training, to appreciate it, and to cling to it as a sort of ideal in life. No sooner had Goethe come to Weimar than the young Duke's transcendent effort was to fix the wanderer to the spot and to set him to work. Accordingly after some wary months of mutual testing between the two spirits, the poet and the sovereign, Goethe is appointed Privy

Councilor with seat and vote in Council, whereto is added 1200 thalers yearly salary. This was done by the Duke against the opposition of all the old officialdom of the Duchy, backed by their friends and all the gossips of the town. Only the absolute power of the young ruler carried it through. Karl August must have forefelt what could be done by such a man in little Weimar. It was indeed a daring, even risky stroke. But let the fact be noted: the artist as statesman here starts upon his long arduous toil of transforming that little world into the fair shape in which we may now contemplate it enshrined in beautiful words and deeds.

Distinctively the Weimar Decennium now opens, during which Goethe not only trains but gets training himself. He has henceforth to administer the institution against which he once launched his poetic protest; indeed just this world of order is what he has to poetize along with himself the poet. His new vocation with its business he is to turn to art. Even the court frivolities, its masques, its festivals, its dramatic trifles he will seize upon as a vehicle for manifesting the beautiful. Every detail that he touches he strives to bring to its universal consecration, often with small result. The material was too fragile; out of mere gossamers he could not weave

lasting solid works, time-defying. Still these flimsy court spectacles have their meaning for him and also for Weimar.

But the time comes when he feels the inanity of such evanescent literary work; his Genius begins to cry out to him to produce something worthy of itself. Moreover for ten years and longer he has taken his institutional discipline; he is no more the Titan, but he still is the poet. So he gets ready to break out of the Weimar Decennium, and fly to the Southern art-world for restoration.

Still it must be added that the character of Karl August has its negative strain. He was married to a high-spirited, eminently worthy, though somewhat precise Duchess, while he was inclined to range freely in the realms of indulgence outside of his domestic bond. Hence arose trouble enough between the pair, in which Goethe had to be the intercessor and reconciler, yea the reprover of the Duke who well might answer his moralizer: Are not you doing the same thing? Goethe as Phileros was not the best defender of Ethics in its conflict with love. Still he performed his part with such tactful diplomacy that he prevented any serious rupture. These were some of the secrets which he did not and could not tell in his *Autobiography*, but which cannot be wholly passed over in his life-poem.

III.

Frau Von Stein.

Thus we shall retain her Teutonic designation which has already crept into numerous languages, borne by the fame of Goethe, who during this whole Weimar Decennium is bound to her by the deepest tie of his Nature, that of Love. Here then rises to surface that strand of his inner life which has been so prominent in every epoch of his career hitherto—at Frankfort, at Strassburg, at Leipzig, and still before this last, in the first turn of adolescence. And so it will continue hereafter. Goethe's supereminent part in this earthly existence of ours, we repeat, was that of lover, aye the lover of Love herself embodied in many fair forms flitting before him through all his days, which he would unfailingly seek to catch and to trance into poetic shape. So we are to take him up in this role of Phileros, as we have sought to personalize it.

Before he had come to Weimar, during his journey to Switzerland, Goethe had seen her picture in silhouette; he picked it out among ten others and wrote beneath it: "It would be a glorious view to see how the world mirrors itself in this soul. She sees the

world as it is, and yet through the medium of love." Here he gives a strange anticipation of his own future and hers, as well as the coming bond between them. He feels in advance that the soul peering out behind such a face has its view of the universe as created by love and understood by love. He also declares that the sight of that face surging through his imagination robbed him of sleep for three nights. Such is the prelude of Phileros to his longest and most unique affair of heart, and, as he says, the most formative. Also we may note here the strain of prophecy characteristic of Goethe; he deemed himself a poetic somnambulist, seeing with a kind of second sight, or super-sense, his predestined lot.

Who was this woman who had such a power of projecting her soul through space into Goethe's very genius and setting it into violent tumult simply from the meagre outline of a silhouetted visage? Charlotte Von Schardt (Lotte's name again) was born at Weimar in 1742, married the Duke's Master of Horse, Friedrich Von Stein, in her twenty-second year; both her father and her husband were officials of the Court, and she herself was a lady in attendance on the Duchess Amalia. Thus her outer social life had passed at Court whose forms, ceremonies,

proprieties and prejudices she knew thoroughly, and indeed they were ingrown into her being. This is particularly the side of her character which the unconventional Goethe shocks at first, and then he starts adopting it. Thus she becomes the trainer of the Titan out of his Titanism, especially out of his Titanic love. She stimulates Phileros to the highest point of intensity, and then puts him under her discipline and formalism. A very needful school for him and which none of his former young maidens could have accomplished—he was too strong and headstrong for their restraints.

Naturally one asks: What had been the previous discipline of the woman for such a task? We read that her marriage was loveless, quite neutral, though not poisonous; seemingly a made-up matter of convenience, when the all-conquering Phileros appears on the scene. She had borne already seven children in nine years, of whom four had wilted away in infancy, and three remained, all boys. Certainly in these facts lies the most tremendous discipline which womanhood can undergo, the discipline of maternity in just about the hardest form it can assume. She is indeed performing the absolute duty of her sex, which is to be mother of her race, and certainly she has not shrunk

from its fulfilment. To bear seven children in nine years to the man she loves not, yet to keep fidelity to the husband, coupled with the sense of her highest obligation—that is what may be deemed the hardest test of woman, the supreme discipline of maternity. One may well see this awful trial and its mastery in her portrait still, with its depth of sorrow reaching to the soul's bottom, and there accepted if not overcome. No wonder that Goethe at the view of such a picture sympathetically fathomed its deepest purport, and longed to see “how the world mirrored itself in this soul,” for beyond all his experience with women—and Phileros had known a good deal already—here was a new and deeper message from the woman-soul than any he had yet heard or seen, not excepting that of his own dear mother. Thus the poet gets to glimpse the function of womanhood at the very fountain of its being. He is brought into the presence of the original Eve of creation.

But now having given expression and full validity to this eternal element in Frau Von Stein, she has with it curiously commingled something quite opposite, a very finite element of gossip, petty jealousy, a feminine tendency to nag the man she loves, and because she loves him. How many apologies

has he to make, defences, explanations, embroidered with tenderest words of devotion! All for some little impropriety or neglect or pleasantry not rightly timed or tuned according to her sense of what befits such a man. Later we shall see this strain of her character rise to the surface and jet forth stinging vitriolic sarcasm and disparagement against her former lover when he has taken unto himself another woman, she in the mean time having become a widow.

Here it may be well to note of this important woman that her long life running parallel to Goethe's, shows three distinct stages of development, if we pass over her unmarried days of which we know nothing worth knowing. First is the mentioned stage of maternal consecration, quite at the close of which she meets Goethe with whose acquaintance opens the second stage, starting a new and very distinct change in her disposition. The following passage spoken by a character in a little drama of Goethe's, is supposed to be taken literally from one of her letters: "The world again becomes dear to me, though I had flung it off—dear through you. My heart indeed reproaches me; I feel that I am preparing troubles for you and myself. Six months ago I was ready to die, but now I am not." This touches upon another trait of

Frau Von Stein's character: the struggle between her conscience and her love, to which is allied her premonition of some penalty for what she acts and feels. And the final stroke came, her lover quit her for one whom she deemed far inferior to herself. Therewith began her third stage, a long spell of sullenness and spiteful utterances against the man of her heart, lasting nearly forty years—she died in 1827. Her letters during this time have been published, or extracts from them (Düntzer, *Charlotte Von Stein*), and they make a running commentary on Goethe's works and his actions for nearly the entire stretch of his two great Periods, as we shall hereafter mark them out. She becomes the Weimar Cassandra, uttering doomful words over the country's greatest man—venomous prophecies but often true and fulfilled to the letter. Thus we may bring before ourselves the three grand sweeps of her life—the last of which she sat in her cottage not far from Goethe's own door, and in look and word threw upon his wife, his children and himself the venom fabled of the basilisk.

Goethe's letters to Frau Von Stein have been edited and published—more than 1500 of them—the edition under my eye numbers them at 1775, of which more than two hundred belong after his breach. These letters

may be regarded a continuation of his Auto-biography (*Dichtung und Wahrheit*) not on all its lines, but on the main one, that of Phileros. As she was still living and a near neighbor, it was probably in part the regard for her feelings and memories, which made him stop his account of his life at the Weimar Decennium. Goethe knew of these letters and was willing to let them tell their own story; indeed they are his chief literary work of art during this Epoch. He re-enacts in reality his Werther romance, though this too was based upon fact. He becomes enthralled to a woman belonging to another; not only betrothed is she, but married and a mother many times; and so we have an actual Wertherian situation of hopeless love, and like Werther, written in letters full of emotion. Goethe himself recognized the parallel and poetized it somewhat thus:

What I then dreamed and suffered,
Now I experience awake.

So we have in these Letters the immediate, often daily gushes of the heart, the primal elements of his love-life during this time, not wrought over by the ageing man into his more artificial Autobiography, nor transfigured to alien artistic shapes as in his *Tasso*, which a French critic pronounced an intensi-

fied *Werther*, nor having the youthful ebulliency of his first novel, which starts the evolving series. Goethe through some ten years is called upon to endure the pangs which caused his first hero to solve his problem by suicide. But now he cannot save himself by killing off his hero who is none other than just his own person. The tragic act of that Titanic epoch must be met and undone, cries his destiny: you are to solve a more desperate case of impossible love, and live and pass to a new stage of your career. So the two Lottes, she of Frankfort (or Wetzlar) and of Weimar are coupled not only in name but in a unique immortality given them by the love of a poet. To be sure there is too much repetition of tiny tendernesses, honeyed little phrases and petty chores—a prolonged iteration of candied humdrum, till one lays aside the excess of sweetmeats.

But it is the eyes of Frau Von Stein which proclaim her chief evangel from within—those unusually large, melting, lustrous eyes swimming in a tidal sea of their own and overflowing with an all-motherly tenderness appeared to tap and ray out into sunlight the very sources of creation. So she could start that prophetic anticipative throb in Goethe. Yet she undergoes transformation through him as well; one observer notices how she be-

gins to get like Goethe, in speech and tone and even physiognomy. The poet confesses that she knew "every trait of my nature," that she could "read me with a look," that she "trickled into my hot blood drops of restraint," and was able to stem "my wild erratic course."

Still there was a slow but rounded evolution in this decennial companionship. At first she would mother him in the way of right courtly manners, teach him good behavior, him the defiant stormer against all conventions. This he feels now to be his deeper call: to make himself harmonious with the order about him. So he sings of her as the one "who gives me back more purified the purest of my impulses." She had read his early romance and identifies him, saying "I know not whether he or Werther is talking to me." But with a few years the inner bond becomes stronger, yea, indissoluble forever, though still impossible to realize. Not only heart but intellect grew together, they studied in common Natural Science, Spinoza's philosophy, as well as literature, but her demand for personal fidelity began to be more exacting, yea tyrannical; her jealousies shot bitter reproaches with imperious haughtiness. Goethe still took a free range with the ladies in accord with his old habits, particu-

larly was she jealous of Corona Schröter, who had not the legal impediment of marriage, nor the handicap of age, children, husband. Indeed Goethe was already known to have had too many transcended loves to be without suspicion. Thus the fact became ever present to him and to her: she could not give like for like, though she demanded his freedom for her unfreedom. The countercurrent could not help setting in: he was a hopeless slave without any reward for his slavery; the supreme fruition of love in the Family could not take place, but it became his damnation to stay in that inner grinding hell of blasted hopes, ever being re-born only to be accursed. Hence we begin to trace in the later letters of the Decennium the carefully hidden yet growing resolution of Goethe to get rid of his bondage which had developed into an Inferno out of a former Paradise.

Still he covers up his changing soul with all the more profuse display of emotional fireworks. Even more wonderful and intricate became his arabesques of imagery—no wonder that she began to suspect their full sincerity. Moreover she had so encased Goethe in her proprieties that he had lost touch with men, had become stiff, formal, silent, quite the opposite of the genial Titan he

once was. Therewith too he had lost his power of creativity; his great poetic plans Faust, Meister, Tasso, Iphigenia, would not unfold and organize themselves in his present condition of servitude. His Genius seemed bottled up, helpless and hopeless, hardly alive but for some flutterings brief and uncertain. He began to long for death, he might after all enact his Werther to the last deed of suicide—such an existence could not continue. Love the impossible was slowly murdering him in the presence of the Stein—so he must flee. When at Rome looking backwards, he writes to her still: “Alas! dear Lotte, you do not know what violence I did, and am still doing to myself, and the thought not to possess you is what grinds and consumes me from the foundation, let me construe it as I may.”

So he must flee for self recovery along all his broken lines—love, poetry, life itself. Weimar must be left behind, Phileros has finished another stage of his life’s apprenticeship and can wait no longer without losing his goal. But how about Frau Von Stein? She also passes into a new development, as already set forth; from being the poet’s very Muse, she changes into the vengeful sybil of his fate, his mirroring oracle of ill to come for ill done by him; re-enacting Cassandra,

Ilium's frenzied but true prophetess of misfortunes sent from the Gods for its misdeeds. She belongs to quite the whole course of his life, being to him the voice, often the vindictive voice of retribution, once angelic in love, now demoniac in hate, not without cause. Thus she remains a very significant character in his evolution, a character, however, which he has not portrayed, but which he must have often heard in the depths of his soul responsively. Once the nurse of his good genius, she is transformed into the scourge of his evil genius. So she has her necessary place in his complete life-poem, embracing the total Goethe unwritten as well as written.

During these ten years, what about the husband, Herr Stallmeister Von Stein? One cannot help having some curiosity concerning his part in the affair. For after all we are human and must need ask, what would I have done were I in his place? It seems that he was not jealous, but accepted the relation with a certain nonchalance if not approval. He attended to his business with horses and cattle, also he operated a factory, letting his own boys alone, and leaving the superintendance of their education chiefly to Goethe, who with a paternal affection adopted one of them, little Fritz. Perhaps we have the right to hear the accommodating husband say to

his wife: "You deserve love which I have not given, cannot give because I have it not. I see you are not happy with me, but faithful. So find your happiness where you may, but leave to me, phlegmatic as I am, my pipe and beer and stable."

The chief function of Frau Von Stein, then, is to subordinate the wild poet from Frankfort to order, law, and outward convention, at present especially useful to him as a court official. But of course such training, only possible to him through love, goes far deeper than mere ceremony; it brings him to re-construct not only externally in form but internally in spirit the whole existent institutional world, now his prime need both as poet and as man. Again the woman bears a creative part in Goethe's total development, and spurs him to his highest production.

So Phileros is not going to be left behind at Frankfort for the young girls but passes with the poet to Weimar, as the most essential factor of his personality. There he enters upon a new experience of his love-life, his attachment to an older woman, who in her tactful way mothered him, and through her maternal power won his abiding devotion. It is not the first nor the last time that the elderly matron entralls the more youthful lover. Thus Goethe was tethered for years

with a love impossible of fruition at the age fittest and most natural for wedlock, and seemingly lost the opportune time for rightly entering the family.

It is to be expected that anti-Phileros has not been silent about this episode of the greatest poet-lover that ever lived. Voices of protesting women can be heard censuring the formation of such a tie in the first place, then blaming the man for breaking it off so heartlessly. What a hubbub of opinions vituperating and defending both parties to the affair! Very suggestive becomes the attack of the vowed celibate at this point, assailing all love and lovers in their supreme human representative, Goethe. For such a celibate is also a representative voicing a vast mass of peoples, faiths, and institutions. The Jesuit Pater recognizes fully that love is the central creative force of all Goethe's poetry, as well as of his life. (Baumgartner's *Goethe*, I. 279, etc.) Phileros is slashed right and left by the keen satire of his sacerdotal foe, who is both strong-worded and well-informed. In the outcome we hear the damning judgment of the priest: The poet sought in the love of woman what God alone can give.

IV.

Literary Production.

There is no doubt that the literary writing of Goethe during the Weimar Decennium shows a sudden and all-round shrinkage. To every reader who gets to the point of seeing and marking off the various stages of Goethe, this long paralysis of his deepest Genius becomes a study of pivotal interest and contemplation. It seems as if his sun of life were in lasting eclipse. Still his creative spirit did not die, it continued to throb out at intervals in little spurts, and underneath the strong outer repression the fires kept smouldering, if not burning. In 1782, hence in the central part of this Decennium, he thus speaks of his own true vocation, after having enjoyed the rare luxury of composing a little bit of his *Meister*: “Properly I am born for a writer. When I have written anything well and fully up to my conception it gives me a purer joy than otherwise.” But the immortal Apollo in him has to serve out his apprenticeship to the mortal Admetus, now the deity’s master.

We have already given what we deem the inner necessity of this stage in the evolution of the poet. He must recover from his re-

volt against the established order; his defiance of the Gods is no longer his poetic evangel but submission to the law of overarching Heaven; he can now say: Let no mortal dare measure himself with the Immortals as did the Titan. Human limitation becomes his theme of verse under many images. He lays down in strong lines the bounds of humanity, and actually celebrates the finitude of little man. So he seems to be squeezing into little Weimar and into the numberless littlenesses of the life there; the day is indeed filled with microscopic duties which he has to perform or go to the wall. How different was the attitude of Prometheus, the daring challenger of the Olympians! But now he glorifies the Divine in his most exquisite verse, and exalts Godhood to the world's supremacy in many a fresh-wrought phrase which shows the new insight at its deepest font. We might say, if the expression be taken aright, that Goethe got religion in this Weimar Epoch; that is, he reached a religious world-view, in opposition to his Titanic protest against the Gods. Undoubtedly he was by nature susceptible of such a godful impress, as the influence of Fräulein Von Klettenberg showed at Frankfort. Yet he was there the Heaven-stormer in word and deed. But Anti-Titanism is now his category practical and theoretical, in po-

etry and prose; he can sing it and dance it and stage it in many a little skit as well as realize it in the time's business, arabesquing it also with life's philosophy.

Still it must be acknowledged that just this reaction against his Titanic power hamstrings his literary creation in the large sense. He, during these ten hibernating years, will produce no *Götz* or *Werther*, not even a *Clavigo* or *Stella*. His time breaks up into little moments for little things; he finds it impossible to organize and complete any great works. He starts several and fiddles away at them during odd hours; but they remain fragmentary and formless, unfinished and unfinishable. He works at *Tasso*, *Iphigenia*, *Meister*, but they stay merely blocked out and half-hewn, which he will afterward chisel down into artistic shape under very different conditions. Thus the Weimar Decennium has also its torsos, but how diverse from those of the Frankfort Quadrennium! Yet we must remember that Goethe during this Epoch was spending the whole energy of his Genius upon another and more universal work of art, that of the Institution itself; he was laboring to transform Weimar into an ideal organic whole, into the complete State. Not till he had done that, did he feel that he had won his Archimedean *pou sto*, from which

he could move the world. So he submits for ten long years to the grinding drudgery, to the awful self-estrangement from his own true calling, which often tears his soul to very shreds till he has gained emancipation for himself and his world. The social and political structure which he was building was far greater than his *Götz* or *Werther*, and sapped his total creative energy, still Titanic in its way; no literary organism, poem, drama, novel, could be quite so exacting or suck up from the source of creation so much genetic power.

He wrote, nevertheless, in moments of relaxation from his supreme task, many small trifles to amuse the court and the town, operettas, farces, comical interludes, masques. These we cannot even register here, still less estimate them, in their varying degrees of ephemerality; we may say, however, that they are frequently tinged with his present reaction and satirize his own former epoch, that of Storm and Stress, and sometimes he ridicules his own performances, *Götz* and *Werther*. For instance in his little drama called the *Triumph of Sentimentality* he passes judgment upon all Wertherean books, and makes the judge shout out the decree: “*“Into the fire with them!”*” So he scoffs at his own shed snake-skin with an ironical self-

damnation, which at least hints his present spirit at Weimar. Still into the same holocaust the reader will be inclined to fling also these petty insects of his ephemeral muse, serving up to them their own negation.

There is one exception, however, to be made to this trial by fire; or rather there is one kind of production in this very combustible mass of literary frailty that the fires of time have only brightened and tempered to an indestructible duration. This is the lyrical output of the Weimar Decennium. It would seem that the very repression of his business environment caused the purer and more spontaneous upbursts of his imprisoned Genius. We are free to say that these sudden and rather intermittent gushes of written song are the finest specimens of this sort that European Literature possesses. And they are altogether the best that Goethe produced during his long life; they express his concentrated Genius better than any form of his art. If the All-Self ever uttered itself in singing words, they are these. For while they appeal to very particular, even personal emotions, they have the unique power of an universal consecration, being common to all humanity. Short heart-bursts of sorrow and joy, of love and longing, as if heaved up from the world-soul. What is the mystery of

these lyrics? Humanity has gotten a voice and sings German through Goethe. They have their own music even when set to notes, and the words hymn the soul's very melodies.

An answer to Frederick the Great's criticism of German Literature and specially of *Götz*, was written by Goethe, at Weimar, doubtless with considerable vigor. It has, however, disappeared, probably having been destroyed by its author. The fact is significant: the poet himself probably no longer felt like defending his Titanism. We may also suppose that his new respect for authority caused him to look with disfavor upon his own defence. Then the Duke of Weimar was a relative of the Prussian King. So his Weimar obedience suppresses his Frankfort revolt in a typical deed.

His interest in Natural Science begins decidedly to be creative in this Decennium. He discovers the intermaxillary bone, he starts to recreate the vegetable kingdom from an original type, and is led to many observations on Geology and Mineralogy by his development of mining and agriculture. A fragment on Nature belonging to these studies shows his new conception of Nature, very different from his sentimental effervescences in *Werther*. Nature is now the all-

mothering, ever-producing principle, self-generating without cease. "She has no speech or discourse, but creates tongues and hearts through which she feels and speaks." This hints of Goethe's lyrical fountain. Then again he says, "Her crown is Love; only through this can you get near her." He does not quite say how; but probably Love harmonizes the deepest dualism of Nature, whose ultimate scope or push is thus toward Love's unity. So Goethe tries to summon before himself Nature as a whole.

V.

The Longing for Italy.

Especially through the last half of the Weimar Decennium we find traces in Goethe of a deep discontent with his present lot. He feels that he has fulfilled largely his mission in bringing Weimar up to his ideal of a State. He had also trained those who could take his place in its administration. He has risen to the point of having made himself unnecessary, at least for a time. His pupil, the Duke, after a ten years' education, he deems to have graduated. This is well indicated by a letter written by him in 1786 to Karl August: "Your affairs at home are in good or-

der; and I know that you will now allow me to think of myself; in fact you have often requested me to do so. In the general business of the State I certainly am not needed at present, and my special duties I have so arranged that they will be fulfilled without me; indeed matters would run on the same, if I were dead.” This is hardly the case; still we can discern in this act of self-obliteration that he did wish to see the validity of his institutional deed tested. Will his Weimar work of art persist in his absence—has he in it created something which will outlast his days? Well, there it stands yet and we are looking at now.

Moreover he had begun to feel the impossibility of continuing his relation with Frau Von Stein. It brought him many a jar outside and inside. Both the Duke and the Duke’s brother, Prince Constantine, had their affairs of passion, causing domestic and even political troubles which Goethe had to harmonize. But how could he plead with them not to do what he was doing? Did he not himself set the example? Moreover he must have had his pangs of conscience (as she had) about the matter else he could hardly write

I am living for her sake ever
For whose sake to live I ought never.

But especially he had commenced to see that she had come to stand in the way of the full development of his Genius, although she may at one time have evoked it and nourished it by her sympathy. He realized that her schooling was over and that he had paid the fees; she was in reality a transcended stage. Evidently those "physico-moral evils which plagued me in Germany and at last made me useless" are largely connected with his impossible love for Frau Von Stein. This obscure allusion contained in a letter of his to the Duke from Italy hints at least a phase of his secret malady, which stirred imagination but brought no fruition. To be sure he lets her down easily in his letters with many tender outlooks on the future which are just too sweet to be true, and which she herself did not believe. But he is resolved to break the fatal chain, and so without bidding her good-bye or even letting her know his purpose, he slips off one morning on the road to Italy for which he had come to have a longing of such intensity that it too was becoming a disease. He declares that "for several years I have not dared look at a Latin author or regard anything that brought up a picture of Italy without suffering the most terrible pain. Had I not taken the resolution which

I now am carrying out, I would have simply gone to pieces and have become incapable of anything."

Thus he looks upon Italy as the sole sanatorium, which is to heal body and soul of their tortures and to restore him to his true vocation which he has lost. Still he had to pass through and daringly wind up his Weimar Decennium ere he could take the Italian dip of regeneration. This he knew: we have already watched him twice on St. Gotthard gazing down into the classic South, then turning away from the sight back to his Northern home. He had not yet won his institutional world, which he could do only in his native land. But the Weimar training is now done, and again he exclaims: "the goal of my most cherished longing, which filled my whole soul with anguish was Italy." There he is to have a fresh baptism in the spirit of the World's History which was enacted on that soil and uttered itself in the noblest art and poetry as well as in the loftiest deed. His journey had and still has national significance; it was another Teutonic migration to the classic world to win the antique ideal and to take it up into the Northern culture. So Goethe's longing for Italy may well be deemed racial, which, starting with the old German barbarians and running

all through the Middle Ages down into the modern world, becomes most strongly individualized in the greatest Teutonic man, who expresses it not only in the highest literary form of his native tongue, but also in his very Self, in his heart's deepest aspiration.

No poem has had a wider reading and singing than Mignon's song: "Knowest thou the land?" It is the most intimate utterance of the poet's longing for Italy, which he has elevated into an "universal consecration," since not only Teutonia, but all the rest of the world have appropriated it. To the same time belongs the deeply internal poem called "The Mysteries" which is a kind of reproduction of medieval Italy with her religion, art and nature. The stanza is derived from Tasso's *ottava rima*, known already to Goethe's boyhood. In like manner *The Dedication* is strongly Italianized in verse and mood — a poem which he prefixed to the edition of his Works in 1786, which he got together and gave to a publisher before starting for Italy. Thus he collects all his writings of his First Period, before making a start into the Second Period, whose character he already fore-feels. It is suggestive to observe that the poet in this one fact of gathering all his pieces up to date indicates the periodizing of his own life. Indeed he already notes his dif-

ferent stages, or the Epochs of this first great Period as those of Weimar and Frankfort.

But now this Period has rounded itself out to its conclusion in the poet's experience. Its problem is the primal one of the rational man: What signifies to me this transmitted, established social order which has spiritually enveloped and largely controlled me from birth? In its Teutonic manifestation Goethe has wrought through the problem; but he is not satisfied, he feels the limit, he is not universal, he has not fully come into his total heritage, he is not all that man has been, and cannot be at Weimar in his bounded German environment. The pivotal psychological moment having arrived, he clutches it with a sort of desperation and bursts into another world.

VI.

Retrospect.

It is opportune at this point to take a glance backward over the field already traveled, noting especially its general outlines. The Weimar Decennium now winds up, containing the poet's deeply formative discipline during his first stay at Weimar. Too much

slighted has the present significant Epoch been by the biographers of Goethe; indeed we do not recall one of them who has even understood the meaning of this somewhat silent decade in the complete evolution of the poet. To be sure it is largely an unwritten part of his total life-poem; that is, he has left meager record of it in prose and verse; still it is a great canto of his entire song written and acted, and hence must be set forth duly to reveal the achievement of the man in his wholeness. Fortunately the documents, even if fragmentary, are sufficient for this purpose.

Let it be noted again that the present Epoch bears in it a return to the First Epoch, and thus rounds out into a totality of development the entire Pre-Italian time. At the start the youth was in general under the external sway of prescription against which he revolted in his Second Epoch at Frankfort, that of his young-manhood. But at Weimar he not only goes back and takes up the world prescribed, but reconstructs it internally and externally. Thus we may observe a finished cycle of his evolution, which we have already named a Period—in the present case his First Period made up of the three Epochs already designated. These taken together form a process which is in its last analysis psych-

ical, showing the three stages of the one basic thought, namely the poet's relation to the transmitted order in which he was born and which he had to portray. Or, to repeat designations already specially employed: in the First Epoch he Teutonized, in the Second he Titanized, in the Third he institutionalized.

We should also observe that with the conclusion of the Weimar Decennium concludes a Period, the first of the three into which his entire life-poem falls. This we have labeled, following Goethe's own authority, the Pre-Italian Period, after which he passes into a wholly new stage of his development. Thus he keeps unfolding into one plane of life after another without cessation till he seems to embrace a fuller human experience than any other recorded mortal. Such is the unique interest of his career, world-inclusive we feel it to be, not only in extent but in depth.

Some poets never get out of the stage of protest, revolt, negation; they stay Titanic in their denial, as did Byron and Shelley. Both died young, and perhaps did not have time enough to break through their egg-shell. Others never actually pass into this negative period; but remain innocently positive, like Longfellow and many more. Others again take an early dip in the Titanic brimstone but get terrified and flee back to their first inno-

cent Paradise, as we may see in Wordsworth and doubtless in Coleridge. Now it is the peculiarity of Goethe that he takes up all stages positive and negative, in his experience, drains their contents, and then passes on to the next Epoch in his evolution, "without haste, yet without rest."

Thus we may deem his the completest and concretest human life; he goes through all its grades without getting lodged in any one of them, being at the same time laden with every sort of employment. Diversified rays out his work in multitudinous directions, yet unified in one grand process all-comprehending, which it is the fundamental object of his biography to unfold and to keep in view amid the ever-scattering inrush of details. So from this point of contemplation, which regards life's varied content, his biography suggests his universal character, though the latter is more deeply imaged in the basic process of his whole career, of which process we have now concluded the First Period and are ready to pass to the next.

Part Second

Goethe's Middle Period

(1786–1809.)

By this caption we seek to emphasize the fact that Goethe now passes into the Second Period of the three which embrace his complete life. It lasts some twenty-three years, starting from his push for Italy till he begins to turn back autobiographically upon his early career, when he was hovering about his sixtieth year, though this last transition cannot be pinned down exactly to an annual date, as it was not a sudden spurt but of slow

growth. The present Period, accordingly, spans the activity of the fully ripened middle-aged poet, from his thirty-seventh year to the verge of old-age, and brings to fruitage what are usually deemed to be his two greatest books, his *Meister's Apprenticeship*, and his *First Part of Faust*, the novel and the poem of the highest reach of his Genius. These are the towering summits above numerous other lesser successes and also failures. Then it should be added that this Period nearly at its middle overarches the turn of the centuries from the old one passing off to the new one coming in with a mighty political upheaval, the French Revolution, which lies back of this portion of Goethe's life. France was already in the first throes of her coming eruption when the poet turned his back on the North and pushed forward to Italy.

Thus we are brought face to face with the most distinctive, most deeply entrenched landmark of Goethe's entire career. Also it is, let the fact be noted again, the dividing line which he most often drew upon his work, and of which he was himself profoundly convinced. The Journey to Italy may, therefore, be said to have been the grand transit of his Genius from one world to another.

Moreover it was the fulfilment of a lifetime's longing. Already as a boy at home

he heard much of Italy from his father's lips, and saw it in many pictured illustrations; also at an early age he began to delve somewhat in its literature. But toward the last of his Weimar years this longing became pathological, and grew to be a painful malady, from which relief and cure could only be obtained by letting it take its course. At last he heard the hour strike when he must make the pivotal turn, or give up hope of his future career, possibly even of his existence, if we may construe literally some of his words.

I. It was a great act of separation, he often calls it a birth, like a child taken from its mother. He turned away from home, folk, native land and tongue to another country, to a strange people, speech, consciousness. He crossed physically and spiritually the dividing line between the new and the old civilization, as he passed over the Alpine watershed down into Italy, moving from North to South. Moreover it was a transition to a different religious environment, from a Protestant to a Catholic conception of man's destiny, each of them in its way spirit-moulding and world-building, even if Goethe in his personal view hardly acknowledged either. For he then was seeking to reach back of Christendom in this Mediterranean itinerary, and

somehow commune with and make his own antique Heathendom, which started European culture and once brought it to its fairest artistic flowering. This the poet would appropriate in order to be the complete man by being all that his race had been.

So Goethe is now to enter a strange world, and therein to become estranged from his own and from himself. His life-long relation to his immediate environment of home, nation, and consciousness he is to break through and become a stranger in another order. Such we may call his pivotal act of self-estrangement (using an educational term), by which he is to transcend his purely individual selfhood and rise toward universality. He quits his own and makes himself the participant in another civilization, which also belongs to the movement of total humanity. For he has come to feel himself but a half-man, and the problem is how can he rise to be a whole man, and take up the full flower of all human development into himself. As a mere Teuton at Weimar he knows himself only a fragment, and Weimar, yea Germany itself, is but a fragment. So he has to take flight to what he deems his other half that he may integrate his own soul from its destroying scission. Therein he performs his culminant deed of self-estrangement—heroic if

carried out to the full—which he certainly looked on as the masterstroke for his spirit's salvation, as his way of reconciliation with God, since otherwise he were surely damned. And such is still his evangel.

Whom did he imitate? He saw that all History, Civilization, Humanity had taken that dip into the classic Greco-Roman time, Why should not he? The World-Spirit once took this Italian Journey in its terrestrial round some centuries since, and why should not its present supreme representative as mouthpiece and reporter, namely the poet Goethe, do likewise? At any rate he hears the call from supernal sources, and resolves to do the deed and then deliver the message. To be sure he must not stick fast there, permanently caught in one only stage of evolution; he must also get out of it, and return to his own, to his Weimar, but as a new man, with another world born into his soul—a world created long ago yet which he must recreate for himself, for his people, and for his age.

II. In many an iteration repeated during his later years, Goethe characterizes his Journey to Italy as a wholly new era of his life, a veritable second birth. In this way he lays the strongest emphasis upon the deep separation between his career before that event and

afterwards. He looks back and names his flight from Weimar as his Hegira truly prophetic as that of Mahomet. He writes from Italy to Herder, "I celebrate as a second birth-day, as a true palingenesis the day on which I entered Rome." A fresh activity throbs up, old poetic plans revive, works which he deemed dead and buried, begin to rise from their graves and to insist upon a regeneration. Thus the moribund poet with his deceased children of the brain undergoes resurrection in Italy. Says he of that last act of his before setting out for the South: "When I resolved to print my fragments, I looked upon myself as dead." One great Period of his life was dead, but not his life itself; he was simply shedding one stage of his evolution, and advancing to another. In August, 1787, he writes from Rome: "I have passed through one leading epoch (*Haupt-epoche*), completely ended it, and have become almost another man from what I was a year ago."

Thus Goethe has marked in many deep-toned passages the separation, we might call it the chasm between what we here have designated as his First and his Second Periods. When he set out for Italy he was thirty-seven years old; he had just brought to a close the Weimar Decennium and with it the entire

cycle of his early career which we periodize as the First. But the Second Period now opens, which embraces what we may deem his middle age, lasting more than a score of years longer, when a new Period will dawn and unfold. Let the reader then note with due attention, that these divisions of Goethe's life, both the greater and the less, are his own, being repeatedly enforced by himself as supremely necessary, if we wish to understand the man's personality. We may well question if any great writer is as deeply and suggestively retrospective as Goethe; he sought to know himself in his past as the chief fact of his present personal existence, and to attain a full self-consciousness of his own career. Hence we shall often catch him measuring, evaluating, and delimiting the ground over which he has gone and the work which he has done, making himself his own life's careful surveyor.

III. The question, therefore, comes up all the more pressingly, What did Goethe actually get from his Journey to Italy? First of all, we may take his own statement of his case, evidently thrown off at random in a letter to the Duke from Rome: "The main purpose of my Journey was to cure me of the physico-moral evils which tormented me in Germany, and then to quench my hot thirst

for true art." The first of these reasons as a private confession the Duke probably understood, if we do not; as to the second reason, his desire to come to an inner clearness about art, his book on Italy is a continuous commentary upon it. Goethe had reached such a point in his cultural development that he had to appropriate unto himself the peculiar expression of man civilized which is known as the artistic. Moreover he had to go to the land where this unique evolution took place, or which became its center, and which continues to possess its historic remains. Italy was a museum of antiquity where still the ancient forms of beauty could be seen, and where the old civilization could be inhaled directly from the atmosphere in which it was born. The chief instinct which drove Goethe to Italy, in our opinion, was that he must now take up into himself all that his race had been in the way of culture. He is to become the whole man, the individual epitome of total humanity, and not merely a German. Later we shall find that even Europe cramps him too much, and he cannot stay European, but he will betake himself, not in person but in imagination, to the Orient, to Persia, to India, even to China. So this desperate break for Italy, for the great past of Rome and also of Greece, is a mighty

sweep of his Genius toward the universal man, properly the ideal goal of us all. To be sure he will not and cannot lose his Teutonic substrate of character and language in this transfiguration into universality.

At Rome he attempts in a letter to designate the grand change in himself by a special category, which he calls *solidity*: “Really nothing petty can be found here. When I turn back into myself, as people do so readily at every opportunity, I discover a feeling which gives me infinite joy so that I dare even express it. Whoever earnestly looks around here and has eyes to see, must become *solid*—he must get a conception of *solidity* which never before had for him any such vitality. The spirit is stamped with a fresh efficiency, and reaches earnestness without being dessicated, attaining a steadied nature yet ever joyous.” This curious passage of self-inspection (which we have freely translated according to our view of its purport) hints the inner transformation of the man communing with the mighty presence of a greatness which is indeed past, but whose spirit still hovers over the spot where it was once the supreme living reality. Such a spirit the traveler Goethe will take up and make over into his own, and thus become a solid character, no longer foggy, flighty, ephemeral, suddenly

explosive. No longer the volcanic Titan can he be, whom he now sees to have constituted only a fragment of the great Whole, and a negative fragment at that. The Heaven-stormer of the Frankfort Quadrennium is himself ascending into glorified Olympus, and becoming as one of its serene Gods in the happy classic land. And the paralyzed poet of the Weimar Decennium is fledging afresh his wings of song, is getting creative once more in a second juvenescence, being dipped in the original fountain of the world's poetry and art. He felt himself already an old man at the end of his First Period, but now he rebounds with the elasticity of youth again in its primal upspring toward creation. So he exclaims: "My renascence, which keeps working me over from within outward, goes on fermenting." A changed world-view he spies in himself, "which this life here in a wider world has instilled into me." Then he makes the pivotal confession: "Verily it is my ethical sense along with my artistic sense which is undergoing the great renewal." Here we dare interpret that the insight is now dawning upon the poet that the world of institutions, the true ethical world, is the basis of all right life as well as of all right poetry. Hardly can his words mean the narrow moral view of the universe, to which way of think-

ing he was always averse, probably too much so.

At any rate, we may affirm that Goethe is again attending a University, not that of Leipzig or Strassburg, as he once did; we may deem it the University of the World and the World's History, which in his time was located at Rome, and still is to be sought there in many of its unique branches. In this sense he is going back to his youth, and starts a curriculum of studies, whereof we read not a few details in his book on Italy. But the main fact is that this University was a true University, true to its name and right purpose which is to universalize the man, not simply to specialize him into thousandfold knowledges, but into the one supreme, all-embracing, all-organizing knowledge. "No such thing possible," cries out our time's skepticism and pessimism, portentous products largely of our modern University training. Goethe's Italian book becomes thus a work of great significance to-day, being the record of the struggles of a student at the World's University, located at the heart of the World's History, whose essence he is striving amid all his wanderings and caprices to appropriate.

Hence it comes that his stay will be somewhat prolonged. At first he intended to dash

through two thousand years of the Time-stream at its highest tide in a few months—many a modern tourist winds up the whole matter in one or two weeks, which may be better than mere zero, but usually is not much more. Very different in this regard was Goethe, who could not relax his desperate grapple with the University of Civilization till he had won possibly its heart's secret, or at least some of its profoundest lore which he could take home with him and realize at his leisure. So he puts off again and again his fixed day of departure, till almost two years have sped away. Finally, on the 23rd day of April, 1788, he quits Rome, passing out by the Porta del Populo, which he had entered October 29th, 1786, and winds down the Flaminian Way gradually out of sight of the Eternal City, which had given him such a lesson of its eternity. His immediate associates have handed down the statement that every day for two weeks before his departure he wept like a child. He compared himself to ancient Ovid, who was banished from Rome by Augustus, and poured forth his lament in an Elegy (*Tristia*) as he quit the city on a moonlighted evening. Long afterwards the old Goethe, pensively retrospective, could say to Eckermann: “Compared to my state of mind in Rome, I have

never been really glad since.” Such then was his exalted mood, the mood of a human being who is daily sweeping toward the goal of his full humanity, and feels the ever expanding joy of rising to the universal man. So we may understand another old-age declaration of his: “I can say that only in Rome have I experienced what it is to be properly *a Man (Mensch)*.”

IV. And now we have to ask, What part of the total Roman heritage did Goethe take unto himself with the deepest and most intimate love? For he by no means cared for all of it equally; not a little of it he passed with an empty and silent stare; and some of it he rejected downright, even with a Mephistophelean scoff. There is no question that Rome the antique was his darling, with what had been left of her art, even if chiefly borrowed or imitated from that of Hellas. To-day the traveler finds on the same spot of ground three great Romes layered chronologically, the ancient, the medieval and the modern; the last as the capital of new united Italy had not yet been born when Goethe threaded the narrow Roman streets. But medieval Rome was there present in full domination, spiritual and temporal; but to it he paid hardly enough attention to show his aversion. Undoubtedly he went the round

of the multitudinous churches, old and new, but with no devotion in his soul, yea with no hearty appreciation of their art. The fact is, Goethe was fundamentally in an anti-Christian, heathen mood at Rome, and his divine associates were the old Gods. He had not yet evolved into the Middle Ages whose expression in all its forms, in religion, art, and institutions, were repugnant to his present bent and deepest instinct. So it comes that of the three great historic Presences on the soil of Rome he loved only the ancient one, and sought to build its shrine in his heart.

That is, Sculpture, the art of the ancient world was really the profoundest object of his aspiration, we might say, of his veneration. It was that which he would penetrate both with his feeling and his intellect, nay, he would like to become its creative, or rather re-creative artist. Undoubtedly he dallied much with drawing and painting, and brooded over their artistic meaning for his culture and even for his vocation in life. He had many dealings with artists, especially German artists, who often gave a temporary splash of their color to his soul. Still he would sink back upon the Antique as his artistic bed-rock, and seek to transmute himself into the consciousness which could create such a world of beautiful forms.

And to his own guild of poets, what was his attitude? We turn the leaves of his book and are astonished to find how little the great medieval sunburst of Italian poetry shone into his vision. Nothing of Petrarch or Boccaccio, both of whom would naturally be thought as very attractive to our Phileros, the lover of Love. Nothing of that shining melodious band of romantic poets headed by Boiardo and Ariosto, with their endless frisking of fancies; only Tasso, known to him from boyhood, seems to have occupied him seriously, since Tasso, the poet at the little court of Ferrara, had gradually grown into a type of himself—Goethe at the little court of Weimar, soon to be set forth in one of his deepest-keyed dramas. But what about the greatest, most universal poet of them all, Dante, writer of one of the Literary Bibles of the race? Some Italian admirer appears to have asked him in company, whereupon follows the explosion: “I have never been able to understand how anybody could occupy himself with such poetry: the Inferno is simply horrible, the Purgatorio ambiguous, the Paradiso tedious.” So the one world-poet judges the other; but Goethe in his present heathen mood could only be repelled by the intensely Christian poet. But let it be noted that Goethe in later life will make some headway

—probably never much—toward the appreciation of Dante, especially through the medium of the new German translation of the Divine Comedy by Streckfuss. In a famous soliloquy near the beginning of the *Second Part of Faust* he adopts the Dantean *terza rima* with its peculiar metrical music, and at the close of the same poem some of the horribly infernal imagery of Dante is summoned before us not without a satirical streak. But the most significant reproduction of the Dantean measure and conception is in Goethe's short poem, entitled "Reflections on Schiller's Skull," which skull having been dug up from its resting-place in the grave, was brought to Goethe for inspection and identification. Nothing in Dante is more ghoulish and skin-shivering than this gruesome incident, in which classic Goethe, now also taking a short dip into the realms of the dead like Dante, gives utterance to his philosophy of bones which he had much handled in his osteological studies. In grim Teutonic humor and grisly grotesquery the whole situation outstrips Dante, who never quite reaches the lofty apex of Goethe here fondling the death's head of his dearest friend and exclaiming: "How am I worthy of holding thee in my hand!" And rising out of this bone-house the Teutonic poet visions a grand

revelation of God (God-Nature is the Spinozan name here) wherein again he is like Dante in all his unlikeness. So much for the peculiar relation between these two supreme masters in the poetic realm; but we must add that Goethe's appreciation of the two other world-poets, Homer and Shakespeare, was of the highest; in their case he felt the deep underlying kinship which begat him and twinned him with the supreme Parnassian brotherhood of the ages. But Italy did not reveal to him the poet of all its poets, ancient or modern.

Was Goethe, then drawn to no poetry on the Italian soil? Undoubtedly, but it seems to have been chiefly ancient Roman verse and small verse at that; little Propertius took strong hold of him, and to the audacious obscenities of spicy Martial he confesses, along with the amatory daring of Ovid. This influence he will carry back home with him and there reproduce. Big rugged Rome anciently was a contrast with her petty pretty poetry—somewhat like America at present. And even this old Roman literature was the moon's reflection of the Hellenic sun; Greece was the original fountain of all Roman art and literature to which Goethe appears so devoted.

In like manner the sculpture which the

Northern pupil so diligently studied was not original, but copied or imitated from the Greek masterpieces. He was still in the swaddling-clothes of Winkelmann, a great man indeed, but a greater beginner who has trained his pupils, though lesser men, to modify, and even to reverse many of his judgments. On the whole, then, Goethe at Rome never saw real Greek art, but only its later Roman reflection. Still his enthusiasm would effervesce beyond all bounds. Thus he speaks of the Juno Ludovici, a copy, or it may be, a copy of copy: "This was my first love in Rome. No words can give an idea of it. It sings like a song of Homer." In a similar manner he praised the Zeus Otricoli, which modern criticism has so belittled. But recent archaeology has gone to the other extreme, and has underestimated the worth of these Roman copies and reproductions. The study of the Elgin marbles, taken from the Parthenon, has developed a new standard for sculpture unknown to Goethe.

Still he knew that this whole world of Roman art and literature was derivative from ancient Hellas. But he seems almost to have preferred such a copy to the original. These Greek forms were really exiles in Rome and showed the fact in many a little turn and transformation. Their silent sigh for their

native land can still be heard by the sympathetic visitor who will stop and listen. But somehow Goethe did not hear it; or if he did, he held aloof from following it to its source. So he turned away from a tour to Greece when he had the opportunity. Count Von Waldeck gave him an invitation to cap his Italian with an Hellenic Journey. But he declined, and thus he never saw the landscape of Greece and her peculiar environment of Nature; he never got a view of the noblest Greek statuary, genuine works of Phidias, the greatest sculptor of all time, which were then still to be seen in the pediment of the Parthenon. And from the supreme examples of Greek architecture at Athens he averted his eyes, satisfying himself with a brief trip to Sicily, once colonized from Greece. Yet the chief purport of his Italian Journey was that he might be baptized in and be regenerated by Greek art. To our mind the decision seems so strange, so contradictory of his deepest bent that we have tried to probe to the bottom of it.

Dismissing his fear of sea-sickness, of which he had a dreadful attack during his voyage to Sicily, and shoving aside various other determents and inconveniences which can be imagined, we believe that Goethe in Italy preferred Hellas Romanized to the act-

ual genuine Hellas itself. In the first place, the latter was farther off from him both in space and in spirit. Then he may have felt the need of a mediator like Rome who had already done what he was trying to do—had appropriated Greek art and culture. Little Athens was too like little Weimar which he had just left, and had in a way transcended. He would follow Rome, which had universalized not only Greece but the world. Already we have noticed that the deepest trend of Goethe in this Italian Journey was toward universality; he would rise to be the race-embracing man. Therein he felt his ultimate kinship with Rome, which in its sphere had risen to be the great World-State of antiquity out of a little City-State on the banks of the Tiber. No Greek Commonwealth had done the like; they all showed themselves unable to rise beyond their limits institutionally. So Goethe longingly sought Hellas, but he sought it through Rome, not through itself. Only Rome the universal could universalize him, not the individualistic Hellas. Nor in his present mood could he feel much inner inclination toward the history of the typical Greek City-State with its democratic bent. Politically he never did like Athens, creative center of Greek art and poetry and history.

Thus Goethe amid all his Hellenism and

classic Heathenism never poetized Greece from actual observation and experience; he preferred to take it through its Roman transmutation, as more congenial to his present stage of development. Still through this medium he tapped the Hellenic fountain-head and made it flow into Teutonic speech, so that in his classic modern reproductions he appears a greater and more original poet than any of his Roman prototypes, not even excepting Virgil.

V. Curiously significant is the fact that Goethe often speaks of this journey to Italy as if it were a return to his own; "once more at home in this world," he cries, "and no longer an exile." He had never been during life in that land of the sun, but the farther South he went, the more he felt that he had been there before, and that he was simply coming back. Thus a new experience kept fleeting through his soul dimly, that of a former state, in which he was an inhabitant of the Mediterranean world, whither he has now returned for a while to take a fresh dip in its primeval fountain of human evolution. He has compared himself to a somnambulist, when composing in an exalted mood; he somehow went off into another state unconscious, yet resembling the activity of sleep. And during this Italian Journey he seemed in this

somnambulistic condition; he often felt himself half adream, another former life floated around him, a sense of pre-existence kept weaving through his sense of existence. Thus his poetic imagination would literally fling him back into the antique past as an actual denizen, a re-incarnation of his very selfhood he weened to be taking place, so often does he allude to his new birth, celebrating even what he calls his second birth-day at Rome, now more deeply significant to him than his first birth-day at Frankfort. Thus by his intense aspiration he was wrought up to the height of realizing the old classic world as an actual presence here and now, so that he brought back the pre-existent to re-exist in himself by a poetic metempsychosis. And is not some such thing the chief fruit of a visit to the classic land to-day? Can you transmigrate yourself backward and become an old Greek or an old Roman, and thus re-incarnate the soul of the World's History, of which they were once the lofty builders? And so it comes that Goethe reveals himself a typical man performing a typical journey to the original fountains of human culture and civilization.

Impressive is the attempt of Goethe to take up the entire classic art-world into his arms, or into his brain and carry it off. He worked

at old coins and their meaning, he studied gems and vases, he drew and modeled; he would become a new creator of the antique expression, he sought to be sculptor, painter, architect. The mighty presence of Roman antiquity so overpowered him that he became confused for a while about his true vocation in life, over which he had always had some wavering. Was he to be an artist? Too old for one thing, but chiefly his true genius lies in another field. So at last we hear the regretful confession: "Every day it becomes clearer to me that I am properly born to be a poet," that being his native art; "from my longer stay in Rome I must henceforth seek this advantage that I renounce the practice of the plastic arts." Still he did not even after he returned to Weimar; so easily he could not renounce so fond a hope, and for many years he kept up a desultory dabbling with the thought and thing.

It must not be imagined that the journey to Italy did not have its drawbacks. It blunted, yea stunted his perception for any other kind of art except the classic. Especially the Gothic, which he once so admired in the Strassburg minster, he flung under his feet with contempt. Hence he showers derision upon the Doge's Palace at Venice, and sneers at his own former unformed self

and its likings. Most striking is his total neglect of the unique Gothic Church of St. Francis at Assisi with its epochal frescos, while he pours out his enthusiasm for what was once a Roman temple, small and not excellent of its kind. So petty becomes his judgment at times that we think it must be in great Goethe a little affectation. But the narrower his outlook, the intenser it surges into and through the classical channel. Christian Italy with its art he spurns on the whole; it is not for him, at least not now. And the mighty expression of the Greco-Roman world in History he hardly touches upon. He seems to know nothing of its great historians. Indeed during his entire life it must be acknowledged that Goethe was defective in the historic sense. It is true that in one of his letters he says that since arriving at Rome he has recovered his enjoyment of History. But of such enjoyment we hear little afterwards, except somewhat of the History of Art. He also declares that Rome is the right spot for studying Universal History, with which statement the study in his case seems to have come to an end.

Noticeable also is his cessation of lyrical productivity in Italy, compared with that of Weimar and Frankfort. Why did such a deeply spontaneous strain of his soul-life dry

up so suddenly? This too lay in his changed mood and education. The lyrical gush is sudden, small, particular and of the moment; but Goethe's Italian bent was toward the Universe and the Universal, as already indicated. Little limited Weimar and his confinement there would spurt forth into brief snatches of songs of surpassing intensity and beauty. But the Roman world released his inward pressure, which is the condition of the throbbing lyrical jet of utterance, and gave him its ocean to flow into and be lost. Still the Italian time is not wholly without pretty singing shreds though few and not of first import.

It is well enough to reflect that the spiritual transformation in Italy was not so sudden as it seems on the surface, it merely came to a head there after many antecedent throes, and long preparation. It is true that he never was much of a classical scholar, especially his Greek had a crick in its back which had often to be doctored before it would march to a tune. But all the better he caught the spirit of the classic age by not being swamped in its Teutonic erudition. Full-fledged Hellenists like Voss complained of his violation of the niceties of Greek scholarship. Goethe's aim indeed was not literal translation or imitation, but a spiritual transfusing

of the Greek world into the modern. Wherein he has surpassed any other European poet. Already at Frankfort he was Hellenizing, and he employed Pindaric rhythms with a living power. The free swing of rhymeless irregular measures is found in some of the finest lyrics of the Weimar Epoch. He was Whitmanizing nearly a century before Whitman. In his own view, however, he was Pindarizing, going back to ancient Hellas. Nor must we forget that in the parental home the old Counsellor Goethe was forever recurring in his talk to his days in Italy, over which his dry, pedantic precision would show signs of liquefying. Pictures of Italy and its masters abounded in the household, and books about the subject stood on the library shelves. And it was the one thing which his father was always urging him to do: take a trip to Italy before you are too old. Even Goethe himself, when at last he reached Italy, could sigh forth the lament: "Why not earlier?" This was in a letter to his mother as if in recognition and memory of his father, who never saw his son taking the oft-advised Italian Journey, having died in 1782. And during the Weimar Epoch he started practicing himself in hexameters and in the elegiac stanza, which after his return from the South he employed for so many subjects. Thus in many a little

throb he preluded his classical time before he started for Italy.

VI. In spite of his manifold occupations, and his self-scattering over multitudinous studies—he tried always to do too much—he still clung to the deepest strand of his being, the poetic, and unfolded it in some of his most permanent literary works—*Egmont*, *Iphigenia*, and *Tasso*, and even *Faust*, though this last Teutonic poem resented in its every fibre his present bent, and refused to be transformed after the classic model. So at Rome he could write the wildest scene in the whole sweep of *Faust*, namely, *The Witches' Kitchen*, in a kind of Gothic reaction against Classicism. Than this no circumstance is more significant of the double-natured poet: the dark spectral witch-world of the North layered deepest in the soul of the Teutonic Genius bursts up and insists on utterance right in the midst of the clear sunlit sculpturesque forms of the Olympians. How could he help it? It is in him, in his folk, and in their art and poetry. That witch-scene, however, was but one passing spurt. He cannot finish his *Faust*, even its First Part, in Italy; he must wait till his flood-tide of classicism has fallen a good deal in the lapse of years.

Hardly has he touched the soil of Italy when he feels its creative effect. His old

fragments of great works, reaching back to the Frankfort Epoch revive in him, and march in thought toward completion. As he rolled through the mountains in his stage-coach, the scheme of *The Wandering Jew* came up to him vividly, and he dreamed it out to its conclusion, which, however, he failed to set down in black and white. What peculiar experience could have brought up that theme? He does not say, but one may think of him in his present anti-Christian mood, as represented in the Jewish scoffer at the crucifixion. A negative subject for him at best; no wonder he finally dropped it. Far deeper-searching is the fact that his Iphigenia began to dance before his imagination and to insist upon a new birth here along with his own. At Weimar he had shaped her drama in prose, and it had been acted; but that form of her will never do now; the whole must be flung into this Italian melting-pot and poured over, giving her a new classic vesture in verse. But one asks why does the story of the fate of Iphigenia rise up just now with such a coercive power of expression? Essentially the Greek ideal woman has been banished to a barbarous land where she is serving as priestess to a non-Greek world, say the Teutonic. So a fair image of all Greek culture hovers before him who may be

said to be seeking Iphigenia just now in his Journey. But another subtle psychical fact begins to surge through him: an *Iphigenia at Delphi*. seems for the nonce to supplant the *Iphigenia at Tauris*. So he exclaims: "But what happened? The spirit led before my imagination the argument for the *Iphigenia at Delphi*, and I had to work it out." Why? again we interrogate. Such a theme accords with Goethe's deepest mood, hinting from afar that he has been in separation from his own world, born in exile as it were, and now he is returning to his true home in classic lands. So his ideal in the shape of Iphigenia cannot stay longer at Tauris in the non-classic North, but must return to Greece, yea to the very center of spiritual Greece, to Delphi. There was also an ancient legend to this effect. Thus Iphigenia's return had its parallel to Goethe's return, both having been separated from their own right world. So the poet, journeying Southward, feels his new kinship, and starts to mythologizing the same in Greek forms. He writes in a letter of this time: "It is incredible to what extent I have been led to basic conceptions of life and art during the last eight weeks." He then tells of a plan for a drama upon the wanderer Ulysses, who also is returning home "to sunny Ithaca and

prudent Penelope." Such a theme likewise springs up in tune with his present mood of being the wanderer restored to his spiritual home. Many were his struggles for expression, but out of them all rose three works of permanence, *Egmont*, *Iphigenia at Tauris*, *Tasso*. In fact, all his classic mythical knowledge seems to be undergoing a peculiar metamorphosis into himself, and starts to being transmuted into his own life-experience, especially this present one of Italy.

With this entrance to the classic land and its ancient art, there takes place a permanent personal assimilation, both in character and in external manner, to his ideal. He becomes distinctly what is known as the Olympian Goethe, his personality changes as well as his style of writing in accord with his world-view; his very look turns Zeus-like. No wonder he kept the head of Zeus Otricoli before him in his bed-chamber for early and late contemplation. His friends at Weimar after his return complained that he was not the same man. Well, in one sense he was not; he had sloughed off his old integument, and showed the fact externally and internally. The truth is he was no longer a German of Germany, but a German of the whole world, and now he begins to write not simply German, but universal literature. Whence arose

great complaint of his lack of patriotism, and of his unwillingness to stay cooped up in the Teutonic pale. Still to-day we hear the same objections from his recent German biographers, some of whom would absolutely cut out of his career this classic tendency represented by the Journey to Italy as un-German and unfaithful to the Fatherland—Germany being now over all, indeed just the All.

With this change was coupled a change in his style of writing. He could no longer compose in the manner of *Götz* and *Werther*, the immediate upburst was toned down to classic self-control even in the wildest passion. The result was at first a great disappointment in his German public; the national in him has risen to be universal through Italy, and the neo-Teutonic has evolved into the antique-Hellenic, of course through the Roman channel. Still this was the mightiest necessity of him and of his time, yea of his people too—witness its deepest and most representative movement, that of philosophy, from Kant to Hegel, really from a German to a universal philosopher, who was still a German. Goethe had, therefore, to train his public, and it is not yet trained; he wrote not only for his own people, but for all, since all culture has to make this transition from a local and national to the universal spirit. Many German

writers blame him because he quit his purely German soil and its native literary forms, but the world studies him now because he made the grand passage which is primarily for himself and his people, but also for mankind. Thus he becomes his race's mediator at the most significant node of man's cultural discipline. We must re-enact the highest spiritual achievements of our racial kinship if we wish to be its worthy successors.

Still it should not be forgotten that Goethe after his Italian experience returned to Weimar, where he stayed for the rest of his days. He was not to remain in Italy nor to get stranded forever in the antique, but to evolve into it, through it and out of it, as a stage of his development toward his true goal, as one strain of many in his long life-poem. His function was to acquire ancient culture for his own spiritual health and wholeness; then he was to re-create it in his native speech and impart it to his people, who needed it as well as he; finally his deed as typical and his work as poetical were to reach beyond his own country and time to distant and future peoples and ages. In those days, now more than a century and a quarter ago, it was something of an enterprise to go even from Germany to Rome by stage-coach, though this certainly had its advantages over a rail-

road car. But at present Chicago is nearer to Italy than Weimar then was, if we measure by time, convenience and expense. Hence the world can now with no great difficulty take Goethe's Italian Journey, and externally run through all its localities. But really his itinerary was a spiritual one, and that takes quite as much time as ever.

Some years after this first trip Goethe went to Italy a second time. But his stay was brief, and he had strangely lost his interest in that country, turning it even to a theme of disparagement and satire. Italy had seemingly given him her whole boon in his first Journey, and there remained for him nothing but her filth, beggary and superstition in the second visit. Doubtless a deeper current was starting just in such a negative attitude.

VII. It must not be left out that Phileros went along to Italy; indeed he is bound to go where Goethe goes, in spite of certain resolves to keep him back or hold him down. Goethe as lover is not at all to be smothered in the hoary antiquity of Rome. Indeed Phileros will adjust himself to the new situation, and even take possession of the antique for his own means of self-utterance. To be sure he will find examples enough for imitation in that ancient time.

But listen again! Out at Castel Gandolfo, a social resort not far from Rome, Goethe comes upon a Milanese lady, young, beautiful, and very amiable, who in comparison with the Roman ladies there present shone to great advantage "by her naturalness, her common-sense, and her good manners." Such is the first gentle stroke of the Love-God, as recorded by himself in his Italian book. Then follow games, little talks and loving tenderesses till the poet declares: "I found in the strangest manner that my inclination for the fair Milanese had taken a decided turn, shooting swift as lightning and quite irresistible, as commonly happens to an unoccupied heart." Goethe at her request gives her lessons in English—a very dangerous business under the circumstances. So Phileros is again caught in spite of some little resistances, partly real, but also partly simulated. Then after the sweet dalliance comes the backstroke very suddenly and without warning: she is engaged to another. Goethe discovered this fact as if by accident, through asking an innocent question. He adds: "It is not necessary to describe what horror seized me as I learned the circumstance." He runs off as soon as he can and gives himself up to his agitated reflections. Another case of Werther burning in the flame of an

impossible love. Still our Phileros much-tried recounts of himself: "I had years and experience sufficient to be able to rally myself at once, though the effort was painful." Then he exclaims in heartfelt reminiscence of his former condition: "It would be strange indeed, should a fate like that of Werther pursue me to Rome." Thus the image of the suicide rose up before him in his sudden agony. Still there is no danger, the crisis is very brief even if poignant. Nor will another book burst out of his emotion, as once in his youth at Weimar. That Epoch is past, though its scars remain and can even start to burn again with a little friction. So we have only a short account of the affair in Goethe's *Second Residence at Rome*. And there is no guilt and hence no atonement to drive the author to one of his long and intense literary confessions. Goethe does not mention her by name, which a recent Italian investigator has dug up, and two pictures of her also, one of them by Goethe, have been exhumed. So Maddelena Raggi, very evanescent young lady, flitted before the poet, and caught his glance of love, which made her immortal.

But the poet indulged at Rome in a different sort of love from that of Maddelena, a sort of which he has given no record, at least

not directly, though indirectly he has told enough. In the *Roman Elegies* occurs the name of a shadowy female who evidently belonged to the night-side of Roman life, and whose relation to the author is suspiciously hinted in many a tickling turn of poetic expression. That was his Roman Faustina, whose praises he sang, and who plainly gave him his training for his later relation to his Teutonic Christiane, both in poetry and conduct. Here starts the germ of the greatest fatality of Goethe's entire life. If he had quit the habit when he quit Rome, and had left his classic debauch behind when he returned to his regular home, the matter would have been fameless. But instead of shedding his snake-skin and flinging it away, he takes the serpent itself along with him back to his own hearth. In other words, he re-enacts at Weimar openly what was more or less a clandestine indulgence at Rome, defiant of all public morality. Thus Phileros falls into his truly tragic deed of guilt, giving way to the sensuous side of his nature, and daring to violate the very soul of the domestic institution, then persisting in his violation through many succeeding years.

At Rome, accordingly, the tragedy of Phileros may be said to start in its primal act of violation, unrepented, unatoned, and long-

continued. We shall later find that the poet came to feel what he had done, and even called his offspring the children of Tantalus, of one who had sinned against the Gods. This tragedy will spin an ever-darkening, fateful thread through his life-poem during the whole length thereof; even if he has not told it openly, its influence can often be traced in his writings. Here we may note only the most smiting conclusion of the long tragedy: after some forty years Goethe's son, August, will perish of excess at Rome, as it were on the spot where the original tragic germ, which he bore in him, was laid.

VIII. Goethe has left us a book entitled, *The Italian Journey*, which has a pivotal place in his life and works. It was put together from letters and memoranda more than twenty-five years after his tour, the first volume being published in 1816. It is a much-scattered product, and has a great deal of slag for the modern reader, such as the observations on various kinds of rocks and geology generally. Then there is too much about the artistic and non-artistic nobodies who crossed his path.

The book has the atmosphere of a man let loose after long confinement, and allowed to roam in the joys of a new freedom. Especially his sensuous nature breaks forth on all

sides; every external appearance in the sky and landscape delights him; his pleasure in what he eats is noted; he refuses to have a servant with him. "Every beggar points me the way, and I talk with the people I chance to meet as if we were old acquaintances." He is democratized in Italy, and becomes one of its rabble; each little event is a kind of miracle and each petty object a thing of beauty. He does not wish to hear German at Roveredo, but only "the beloved tongue," Italian. He puts on Italy's costume, and learns her peculiar gesticulations and grimaces as a part of his new vocabulary. Thus he moves southward from the Alps in a state of continual exaltation and unconventional liberty.

That which especially attracts him is the new appearance of Nature, who seems to be on a revel of freedom like himself. She bursts forth into her bright multitudinous Southern forms, she too leaps up released of her German fetters of ice, cloud and fog. Any thought of "the melancholy Northland" produces a shiver in his pen; he calls his people up there "Cimmerians dwelling in eternal mist and gloom who hardly know what the day is like," since there "it is all the same whether it be day or night." Thus Goethe reads sympathetically his own deliv-

erance everywhere into his physical environment. Really he becomes the confirmed naturalist in Italy; especially he gets on track of the typical plant, and wins his insight into vegetal metamorphosis. As he continues to go Southward till Sicily, the lavish outburst of semi-tropical vegetation appeals mightily to the mood of his soul's liberation, all Nature appearing here ungyved like himself and erupting into a world of happy forms.

The human body is, however, the culmination of his rapture. In a letter from Rome (August 23, 1787) he ecstasies: "Now at last the Alpha and Omega of all things known, namely, the human form, has seized hold of me and I of it till I say: 'Lord, I shall not let go of thee unless thou bless me, though I should wrestle myself lame.' To draw is not enough, and accordingly I have resolved to turn to modeling." Here is indicated his deeper transition from graphic to plastic Art, the latter being the solid shape and hence more completely sensuous or natural, as he says. The ideal organism of all humanity he first sought to conceive and then to realize; it became his supreme goal. He says in one of his later letters: "I am now wholly employed in the study of the human form, the non-plus-ultra of all man's knowing and doing." He thought that he had dis-

covered the principle of the ancient sculptors, who in their Gods did not mould mere individuals or make portraits, but produced in their works of art "the highest of Nature's works, made by men in accordance with true and natural laws. All that is arbitrary, or merely fantastic perishes; here is necessity, here is God." Thus Goethe glimpses, as he thinks, the creative idea of the antique, and he even seeks to model it in a little plaster cast, at which he reports people looked in amazement, disbelieving it to be his. So he puts not the living organism as uppermost in Nature, but the work of the old artist as God-maker.

Goethe would accordingly seem to place his insight into ancient art as the highest fruit of his Italian Journey. No wonder he longed to become a sculptor. But that was not his destiny, it would have been a relapse backward twenty centuries if he could have succeeded. Still this delight in the antique may be deemed the summit of his sensuous outburst in Italy. For Sculpture is the most immediate sense-art, having length, breadth and thickness of form like solid matter, and not merely the surface thereof, as is the case with Painting. So Goethe never rested in the unfolding of his sense-life in Italy, till he landed in Sculpture, and therein beheld the

creative ideal of the whole sense-world—the God himself taking on visible material shape through this Art.

It is not too much to say that the supreme attainment of Goethe in Italy was to behold the descent of the Divine into full solid form, which thus became the statue of the God. That was the religious view of the old Greek, the deities came down and revealed themselves visibly in actual shape to Homer for his poetry as well as to Phidias for his statue. Hence springs Goethe's love of the ancient Hellenic world, which he never tires of praising. He reaches the point of sharing its consciousness, and thus of becoming a heathen, as he was often called. Still he did not stay forever in this classic stage. But he did attain to a vision of the old Greek Theophany, or the God's sensible manifestation in art, especially that of Sculpture. So we gather from many a passage, particularly in the latter part of this *Italian Journey*. His use of the term *solidity* (already noted) as characteristic of the antique world would seem to come from the fact that the statue is solid, real, with matter's three dimensions, not an illusion of reality, such as is a picture. Goethe himself became solid in Italy, transformed into his own ideal of art; he turned to a kind of statue, very real indeed, yet

with the Divine in him and through him manifested.

The drawback did not fail to show itself when he came home. He was separated from his time and people, isolated, solitary. Such was his deep estrangement; it took him some years to get back to his own and to himself, and he had to go through a peculiar discipline which is to be narrated later. Still he did not lose his classic impress, but he stamped it harmoniously upon his Northern heritage, especially in poetry.

IX. Goethe gets back to Weimar April 23rd, 1788, after an absence of nearly two years, measured by the calendar, but told on the horologe of the spirit he had been far away from home for centuries. He found his place filled, the world was moving on without him, even in matters of business he was quite dispensable. Such a feeling comes over every man who has been abroad for a couple of years, his social niche is taken, perchance his economic position must be entirely re-made. To a certain extent he has to begin life over, downcast in gloomy humiliation at his lack of importance in his own little community. In Goethe's case such a feeling must have been intensified by the contrast with his former station. But that was not all. He came back from another world a different

man, deeply estranged from his environment. He was in spirit a denizen of the Greco-Roman era, Italianized. Also we may call him, alienated from his native land and its folk, and therefore from himself. His manner was altered, had become statuesque, marble-cold, even if marble-grand; his style of expression was transformed, no longer direct and spontaneous, but measured and serene, freed from its old ebullience. He sought to manifest in act and writ the eternal when he said: "I would occupy myself only with permanent relations."

Thus his very personality is changed, having been shifted from its native base in his own country and people by his present classical pursuit. In some such mood he comes back to Weimar during his thirty-ninth year, hence on the brink of his middle life, which should contain his best and greatest achievement. His whole line of return from Rome seems to have been strewn with sighs, which became deeper when he touched German soil. He says that his companion was the melancholy of "a passionate soul which feels itself dragged irresistibly to an irrevocable banishment." Thus he intimates again that he deemed Rome his true fatherland, which he had to quit.

Still Goethe knows in the deepest and best

of him that he is a German and must return to his own in Germany. Nevertheless he shows the wrenching scission in himself between two cultures, he is halved within, divided at present in his very soul, and the two halves are pulling him asunder in opposite directions. Yet he will not stay at Rome, does not, and he knows what he has to do in spite of all his suspiration. So he trips back to Weimar and home, away from Italy's beauty and allurement.

Externally, then he has returned; but now arises the far harder and deeper problem of an internal return, the spiritual reconciliation of the two sides, or of the two halves of his warring self. And this conflict is not merely his own, or subjective, it lies in the time, yea in civilization itself. Far-reaching, then, is the collision which Goethe has to meet and solve in his way. This is what properly constitutes the work of his Second Period, upon which he has now started. It will last more than twenty years after his arrival from Italy, and bears in itself a great spiritual movement which is not only individual but universal. It embraces the mature middle-aged activity of the poet, very diversified in its multitudinous manifestations, and not easy to put into a transparent order.

Upon what thought, then, does the whole

Period hinge? As before said, Goethe has returned to Weimar profoundly estranged from his environing world and from his true self, through his Italian experience. The supreme object henceforth must be to get back to his own internally and externally, without losing his great new gain gotten from abroad. He has to work through to the harmony of the two clashing world-views which now keep him in discord and alienation. This will give a long list of writings, for his method of winning peace and atonement is his pen.

In other words, the poet in the present Period is to pass through a complete process of mediation, which word may be taken as the best for expressing his inner movement. This process will show three sweeps or stages each of which makes a fresh Epoch in his life's total round. These may be briefly designated as follows:

(I). The solitary Goethe—isolated, estranged, shut up alone in his classical fortress, unreconciled and unmediated with his people and with himself—Chapter Fourth.

(II). Goethe's friendship with Schiller, which breaks up his solitariness and associates him anew. He is no longer single, but twofold and manifold in his reconciliation with life. Each poet becomes the other and

is through the other to a large extent. Goethe is now mediated with the world and himself. This Epoch, the central one of Goethe's whole career, lasts as long as Schiller lives, about ten years, hence we shall often call it the Goethe-Schiller Decennium—Chapter Fifth.

(III.) Goethe is alone again after the death of Schiller, yet not solitary and unreconciled but renovated and restored to himself and to the world—not only mediated through another, but self-mediated, becoming his own center of life and achievement. Moreover, his distinctively classical stage, with its dualism, is brought to a close in a renewed unity with himself and his own.

Such is a brief forecast of the sweep of this Second Period, which is to receive more fully its illustration in the exposition which follows. It is the abiding worth of Goethe for human culture that he passed through this peculiar discipline, and left it recorded for us who come after him, in forms of lofty art. Thus literature in its deepest strain reveals its vicarious character; the great writer suffers for us and portrays his deed for our lesson, if we can take it, through his transmitted experience. For Goethe's classicism had its values to be gained as well as its limits to be transcended, its sorrows along

with its joys, its negative as well as its positive side.

To-day Italy is still more nearly the modern home of the ancient world than any other land on our globe, notwithstanding many recent changes. The Italian Journey is yet in order for the man of culture who wishes to find his own pre-suppositions and those of his age. More completely than any other modern man Goethe went through this purgatorial discipline and set it down in writ that bids fair to be eternal.

*CHAPTER FOURTH.**THE SOLITARY GOETHE.*

Thus we designate the poet immediately after his return from Italy in accord with his own repeated declarations—alone, isolated, unappreciated. Here is a passage in which he pathetically tells his situation: “From Italy the formful to Germany the formless I was turned back, having to exchange bright skies for gloomy; my friends instead of comforting me and drawing me to themselves, brought me to despair. My enthusiasm over far-off and hardly known objects seemed to offend them, as did also my suffering and my laments over the lost paradise; I received no sympathy, nobody understood my language.” Such was his solitary position; no friends, no interchange of ideas, not even a common speech. One of his old admirers wrote of him at this time: “He is no longer good for anything, quite out of place in Weimar now.” When he would impart his new experiences, a cup of cold water seemed to be dashed upon him from every countenance. He exclaims: “I could not adjust myself to such a painful condition, the deprivation was too great.” Still he could not flee back to Italy, that would be to renounce his destiny.

So the desolate poet roamed about his familiar little city as if in a desert. The deepest bond, that of love, which formerly tied him to the place, was broken. The breach with Frau Von Stein could not be healed. There is no doubt that Goethe's loneliness contributed not a little to drive him to the fateful Christiane, when she appeared at the right moment. Phileros had to have somebody to love, and at last in a kind of desperation he took the sudden chance which dropped on his path. Then the rupture with Frau Von Stein became deeper and more acrid, and she began to play the part of ill-croaking Cassandra to the poet and his house.

Also his literary audience failed him completely. Nobody liked the new style which he had brought from Italy. Great was the disappointment of the public at the strange evolution of the author of *Werther*, who, from being the most favored writer of Germany, passed into an almost total eclipse of unpopularity. Herder, his old literary friend, falls off, and becomes more critical than ever. Yet he also soon takes the journey to Italy as if in a kind of rivalry, but its import is nothing in comparison to that of Goethe, who therein illustrated an era of his own and of the world's culture.

Goethe's attitude toward German litera-

ture at this time was that of the solitary poet. What he had gone through some dozen and more years previously, and had transcended, he found in full swing. That is, the Epoch of Storm and Stress he saw rise up before him on the topmost wave of popular favor, to his unspeakable disgust. Long afterwards in a conversation reported by Riemer he described the situation with warmth: "After my return from Italy, where I had labored to unfold myself to greater definiteness and purity in all departments of Art, I found poetical works, old and new, enjoying the greatest distinction—works which filled me with the last degree of disgust, of which I shall mention two, Heinse's *Ardinghella* and Schiller's *Robbers*." These were essentially dramas of the Storm and Stress, which he had actually started and made universally famous during his Frankfort Quadrennium, but he has come to loathe his former Self and its expression through his Italian training. So he hisses at his old outgrown Epoch now revivified and made the time's vogue by lesser and immature poets, while the works of his new-born spirit lay not only neglected but spurned. Thus: "I was terrified at the thunderous applause given throughout my whole country not only by the uproarious student, but by the highly

cultivated court-lady to such monstrosities; for I thought I saw all my efforts completely lost; the objects for which, as well as the method and style in which I had developed myself, seemed to me lamed and thrust aside.” Such is the melancholy overture of the now solitary and unappreciated Genius, quite supplanted and undone by his own diminutive creatures. Nothing can he do but take a dismal backlook: “I who sought to nourish and to impart the purest views of art found myself helplessly wedged in between Ardinghello and Franz Moor” (Heinse’s and Schiller’s heroes).

It was a pitiable plight indeed for the new-fledged spirit, but one of which he has to take the bitter discipline till the day of relief dawns. This was when he had his first sympathetic meeting with Schiller, whose friendship breaks down the walls of his solitary Self’s prison and lets him forth again into the world, starting his new freedom and reconciliation. This friendship was gradually cemented in the middle months of 1794, quite six years after Goethe’s return from Italy. That was surely a long and lonely incarceration, not of the body, but of the soul, and the day of his liberation as well as his liberator became in Goethe’s memory objects of almost worshipful gratitude. Such, then, are

the limits in time of this Fourth Epoch, which including the Italian Journey lasts some eight years. Again we may note that it is Goethe himself who has repeatedly and with precision marked this Epoch of his life lying between Italy and Schiller.

Much takes place in these days: in the World's History it is the time of the French Revolution, which runs so dizzily and terribly its first round from the Convocation of the States General till the appearance of Bonaparte. But from this great event also Goethe was in spirit quite isolated, hardly getting at present a glimpse of what it really meant. But he was active, and of this activity we must not fail to give due account.

Still we are not to forget Goethe himself has to take his part of the blame for his isolation. Everybody complained of his chilling haughtiness, of his lack of sympathy. From his long, intense study and appropriation of Sculpture, he had himself turned to a statue, living indeed, but belonging to cold, snowy Olympus. In his case we think of the ancient conception of deity as *movens non motus*. He might arouse feeling, but he himself was not to feel in turn; he had quite lost his social instinct and his desire of imparting himself.

Moreover, the Duke had practically freed him from his official duties, at least the most

onerous ones. Thus he was isolated from the State, and had no co-ercing tasks of vocation. So in the matter of occupation he was left largely to himself. A dissociated man in the midst of a social order, he could not help feeling all the more solitary. It might almost be said that his Greek ideal had become incorporate in his own body. He was indeed the Olympian Goethe, Zeus-like, modeled in life after the bust of Otricoli, which was his favorite piece of statuary. Still let us not forget that this is but a stage of the total Goethe, which he has to take up, live through, and then transcend, when it has given to him its full fruitage.

But Goethe's ultimate passion after all was the written word. Suggestive it is to watch him in Italy turning away from his dear sculpture and archaeology and nature to poetic composition in answer to the deepest call of his spirit. Under Italian skies even he could not help writing German poetry, of course more or less Italianized. After his return in his isolation he kept on writing, though the output contains a good deal of perishable stuff. Of this Epoch we shall set down the leading items.

I.

Goethe's Dramatic Trilogy.

Three dramas of Goethe deserve to be put together under a common rubric on account of their common origin, development and time of completion, as well as on account of their common place in the poet's evolution. These are his *Egmont*, his *Iphigenia at Tauris* and his *Tasso*. All three had their starting-point back in the Frankfort Epoch, the time of the poet's supreme creativity. They were carried by him to Weimar, during whose quiescent Decennium they were brooded over, wrought at, but in the end lay unfinished and unfinishable. Finally they were borne by him to Italy and put through the Italian crucible with the result that all were completed either during his Journey or not long after his return. Thus their outward destiny was quite the same, and links them together in a joint title, that of Trilogy, which means in general three parts of one comprehensive theme.

The old Greek Trilogy with its three dramas turned on the career of one heroic personage, each of whose three distinctive phases or stages was made the subject of a

play. For instance the Trilogy of Prometheus revealed the Titan's career in three different dramas, only one of which has come down to us. But the Trilogy of Aeschylus, called the Oresteia from its central character, who is Orestes, has been preserved entire. Now in the Trilogy of Goethe, as we shall call it, each of the three dramas has its own separate story and its own separate characters, and so far is disconnected from the rest. Still their unity is Goethe himself, in whom they represent three lines of contemporaneous development rather than successive stages of his spirits unfolding. Each is an evolution running parallel to the others, yet all reveal finally one character of whose total life-poem they form a special part. Hence for our biography the present Trilogy is but one strain or canto of the entire song.

In what order should the three dramas be looked at and studied, and finally arranged as related to one another? Biographers have differed about the question. The three being essentially synchronous in their conception, growth and completion, we may fall back upon their inner relation. *Egmont* in our view is to be put before *Iphigenia* though it appeared the year after (1788). It naturally takes its place as the first member of the Trilogy; it still has many reminders of its

origin in the volcanic Frankfort Epoch, it is less Italianized than its other two dramatic mates. It still retains its old egg-shell of prose, which they have cast off; even its external appearance on the printed page recalls *Götz* with its mass of multitudinous personages of all classes commingled high and low, its sudden changes of scene and its detailed stage directions. The style, too, though much toned down and classicized, shows many a boulder indicating the violent upheaval of a former era. Accordingly we shall look at Egmont first, showing more the preliminary stage out of which the whole Trilogy has developed.

EGMONT.

This is one of Goethe's permanent productions, it continues to be played upon the stage and is read still more as literature; besides, it reveals a distinctive phase of the poet's total evolution.

I. There is a very broad historic background to the drama, but rather indeterminate and not much employed. Still it is that which helps very decidedly to keep the work alive today. There is the conflict between the foreign Spaniard and the native Netherlander—between political freedom and national servitude, between the rule of self-im-

posed law and the reign of absolutism. Still deeper runs the religious struggle which rises against the old church in favor of the inbreaking Reformation. Moreover, there is the attempt to introduce the Inquisition from Spain which the Dutch are quite unanimous in resisting. Thus the time-setting of the drama is thrown back into the up-heaving sixteenth century, when the whole German world of the North had the tendency to break loose from the Papacy, and from Southern leading-strings, to make a fresh start for itself.

The drama of *Egmont*, accordingly, strikes one note of that perennial racial and cultural conflict which began far back in old Rome already before the Christian Era, and, continuing through some two thousand years is furiously going on in Europe at this moment (1915)—the strife between the Latin and the Teuton. In the drama's phase of this millennial conflict the two sides are represented by the Spaniard and the Dutchman. Hence it comes that Germania thrills even now to the representation of *Egmont*, which touches the deepest chords of her folk-soul, throbbing back into her primeval forests. It is worth while to look through the play and observe how many times the poet reaches down to this profoundest substrate of Teu-

tonic consciousness, and sets it to vibrating. In the here presented stage of the wrestle of the two races and civilizations, Philip II., King of Spain, is the upholder of the Latin element, of course in its Spanish form. So we hear quite from the start secret thrusts against him and his rule, from the people, one of whom says in the first scene, "a Netherlander does not find it easy to drink to the health of his Spanish majesty from his heart."

The prime historic fact about Count Egmont is that he was treacherously seized by the Duke of Alva and beheaded at Brussels in 1568. Philip II., of Spain, one of the gloomiest, most bigoted tyrants in all history, succeeded his father, Charles V., as King of the Netherlands in 1555. He first appoints Margaret of Parma, his half-sister, regent, and at once starts trouble by enforcing his arbitrary behest in matters of State and Religion through a foreign army upon a free-minded people. But the regent Margaret is too lenient and too tolerant for the monarch of pure absolutism, and so she resigns in 1567 and the pitiless Alva takes her place. This change of the regents from Margaret to Alva marks the turning point in the dramatic action, and signifies the doom of Egmont.

We should not leave out of mind the his-

toric fact that Spain at this time, in the seventeenth century, was the greatest nation on the globe, was verily filled with the World-Spirit as no other people of the time. This its deeds show in multifarious directions, as well as its limit-transcending character. It had explored, colonized and organized America. It had great men, a great literature, great possessions. So we say that the World-Spirit was for a time Spanish.

Strangely its king, and seemingly its statesmen, thought their call was to annihilate not only outer institutional freedom, but the soul's inner freedom, the conscience itself. The Inquisition sought to reach men's inmost conviction with its hidden power and to shape that by outer means. Every point of faith was to be dictated to the individual; he was to have no spiritual being of his own, but to be moved as a mere automaton of Church and State. Thus Spain collided with the movement of the age, which was bringing forth the free individual, the independent subjective Self, represented in the North—Holland, Germany, England. Naturally she undid herself and lost her own soul, and thus ceased producing great men.

II. Such is the general historic background which Goethe preserves in outline and purport. The universal nature of the con-

flict he never lets us forget, even if he flings it in more or less externally. But when it comes to the details of history, he alters them in every way to suit his dramatic purpose. For instance, the real Egmont was a married man with numerous children, well advanced in middle age at his death; he was not the gay, unmarried Lothario whom Goethe plays before us. He exposed himself to the snare of Alva chiefly through anxiety for his family, not on account of his demonic daring of fate, as the poet portrays him. And Count Hoorn, who was executed with Egmont, is not mentioned, for a good artistic reason. Still more profoundly is the actual historic motivation set aside. Goethe's Egmont is no great leader of the people against despotism, his part is not that of the hero slain in the struggle for freedom; that is the deed of Orange, who is dismissed after one scene of the play in which he endeavors to forewarn his associate of the plot laid for both. But Egmont, the demonic fate-defier, marches straight into the trap.

Goethe was often called upon to defend these alterations, if not perversions of History. He said long afterwards to Eckermann: "If I had made Egmont the father of a dozen children, as History gives him, he would have appeared absurd." So the poet moulded him

over “into my Egmont, as Clara calls him.” That is, Goethe makes the historical Egmont over into Goethe, the young lover and entrancer of women, as when he fascinated Frederika and Lili. But such a character must also have its environing world, and accordingly he sets it down in the midst of a great revolutionary epoch more than two centuries rearward of his own age. So we read in *Egmont* what part Goethe would have played in that mighty religious and political upheaval. He would have cast state and church out of his career largely, deigning indeed a few side glimpses at both, but he would have become the lover amid the throes of battle itself, for is he not the lover supremely, our Phileros upon this earth?

Suggestive, too, of his view of history is this passage written in 1785: “I have often said it and shall again often repeat that the *Causa finalis* of all the world’s conflicts is to furnish material to dramatic poetry, for the stuff is good for nothing else.” Here he denies that universal History has any end or content of its own; it exists to be kneaded over by the poet into his drama. “Wherefore,” he asks, “should a poet merely copy the historian?” So he scoffs at the historic fact by itself as incapable of poetic presentation. Indeed he declares openly: “No person

is historic for the poet," his right function is to take certain names from history and to pour into them his own creations, or perchance, himself. Thus he certainly has done with his *Egmont*. All this, however, goes to show that the historic sense was not one of Goethe's gifts—a point which we shall often have to note in the course of his life. For nothing is more certain than that history has its own goal toward which it is working; we may say that it contains its own distinct psychological evolution as well as the individual person, or as well as Goethe himself, and thus is capable of poetic treatment as much as a man. In other words history has a soul quite as have you and I, and it can be set forth dramatically in its own way, as Shakespeare has done, and others too, notably Schiller.

We have the advantage of Schiller's criticisms of this drama when it first appeared. Many things in it were duly praised, but the censure fell upon the defective historic presentation of *Egmont* who, as connected in time and fate with the great revolution, ought to be shown forth as its hero, marching at its head and fighting its battles, winning its people by the charm of his personality, and at last perishing for its principle. It is true that *Egmont* talks of these things, but does none of them; is none of them in the drama,

which is, therefore, essentially undramatic, leaving out the great institutional act of the age and country. So Schiller exclaims: "That is just the misfortune that we are compelled to take Egmont's services upon hear-say, while his shortcomings we see with our eyes." The truth is Egmont's weaknesses were just Goethe's own, namely, those of Phileros dallying with love, mid the very crash of a world-historical collision in whose jaws he gets crushed to an ill-timed death. Yet mark again! Goethe making his hero tragic, seems to free himself from his own tragedy, and lives to tell the story.

We are, then, to note Goethe's limitation: he could not write an historical tragedy; he always makes it personal, even when it is set down in the midst of the greatest events of historic time. In *Götz* he tried hardest, but only half succeeded in composing a drama of history after the pattern of Shakespeare. In *Egmont* we find everywhere traces of imitation of the British poet, especially of *Julius Caesar* which so emphatically introduces the People like *Egmont*. But the outcome is very different. Goethe cannot sink himself into the event objectively, rather he sinks it into himself subjectively.

III. What then is Egmont in character and deed? Goethe many years afterward, in

the last book of his Autobiography, felt himself called upon to give his own interpretation of his work. He must have often heard the reproach, during the long contest of his people against Napoleon: Why did you not portray for us a national hero in his desperate fight against foreign tyranny? How does it come that you did not give to your countryman a Teutonic Wilhelm Tell, or even a Herrmann in his struggle for freedom against the Latin oppressor? Especially at the time of the war of German Liberation when all Teutonia rose in a prodigious ground-swell to throw off her chains, must the poet have felt the national shortcoming of his work. Orange, the real leader, is curtly dismissed from the drama, with one scene, while Egmont, incapable of leadership, is limned to over-fullness in all his native paralysis through love's sweet revelry.

The principle which the poet invokes for interpretation as well as for self-defense, is what he calls the Demonic, word and conception suggested doubtless by the famous demon of Socrates. It was a mysterious super-sensible Power of which he says: "Everything which limits us appeared penetrable to it; with the necessary elements of our existence it seemed to deal; it could compress Time and expand Space. In the Im-

possible alone did it appear to find its satisfaction; the Possible it spurned from itself with contempt." A superhuman energy, then, descends into the human and lifts it to the mighty performance; the Overman takes possession of the finite man and exalts him to his highest achievement. But why should not this demonic obsession seize its recipient and elevate him into the victorious defender of the Fatherland? Only one reason: that would not have been Goethe, he could not do it by the necessity of his birthright. So he takes away from his Egmont all his limiting relations of life, those of his family and largely those of his country and of his time; he reduces him (so he says) quite to the single untrammeled individual, endowed, however, with a demonic charm of personality which neither man nor woman can resist.

Thus Goethe looks back at his Egmont or really at himself in his Autobiography: "Having set him free from all restraining conditions, I gave him an unbridled joy of life, a boundless self-confidence, a gift of drawing all men to himself by his personal fascination, and hence of winning the favor of the people, the secret inclination of the Princess, the passionate devotion of a maiden, the friendly participation of a shrewd politician, and even the strong re-

gard of his murderer's own son." So the poet recounts out of his drama the striking instances of Egmont's demonic power of fascination—it is the young Goethe living again through the eyes of the old Goethe. Still there was one man whom the all-charmer could not put under his spell: it was the sombre Satanic Alva, the new regent from Spain. Here then he runs upon his tragic limit; the moment he finds the personality he cannot fascinate, that moment means his doom, he is judged to perish.

At this point we may see what the poet sought to do in his *Egmont*. It portrays the tragedy of the Demonic which at last drives upon a Power mightier than itself and goes down. But what pertinence has this to the poet's own career? Goethe finished his *Egmont* practically in Italy as he was looking back and taking a survey of his former stage, that of Frankfort. What a conqueror he had been, especially as Phileros, the All-lover! He began his drama already in Frankfort, but could not finish it; worked at it in Weimar—unfinished still. But the clear Italian atmosphere had clarified his soul's vision till he could see himself in his complete round; now he can bring to a close his work, beholding himself as demonic Phileros to be under judgment. The superlative charm of the

Overman working through him, after untold successes, begets the Fate-defying insolence which hurls him to his end. But this supernal energy gave him his poetic power, being the source of all his Titanic works; still it secreted a negative backstroke which means tragedy.

In the drama of *Götz*, which in many respects is cognate with the present play, we behold the enchantress, Adelheid, the woman endowed with the demonic power of fascination. But in *Egmont* it is the man who is the world-charmer, and cannot in fact help his gift—really it is Goethe himself revealed in one phase of his Genius. But Adelheid's demon is a destroyer, Satanic, negative to all instituted order, which she would fling to the fiends through her fiendish might of passion's enchantment. That cannot be said of Egmont, rather is he inactive in a great cause, hamstrung by his demon, and so fails just through his supreme gift to be the practical hero of his age.

IV. In the evolution of Goethe's personality, Egmont means the tragedy of the Demonic when allowed to run to its uncontrolled fullness. It is the classic Goethe looking back at and measuring the fate of Goethe the Titan, who embodies this demonic energy. Some such tragic outcome he must

have forefelt even amid all his Titanic excesses. He could not help the uncanny sensation that he was dashing his head against the walls of the universal order, but the universe is larger than any terrestrial Titan, and will in the end subsume him even through death.

Then comes the question, and it came to Goethe already at Weimar: Canst thou control thy demon, confining it to its due sphere of activity? Mighty is its power indeed; it is just the original elemental energy of the great individual—but can he harness it and make it do the work of the world? Such is the primordial problem of the young Genius, restless at the limits put upon him by birth. Hence so often he goes to pieces in youth. He sinks in a colossal protest, though he make a huge hubbub and arouse terror and pity at his untimely fate. It is a peculiar fact of literary history that Goethe's greatest English contemporaries in poetry, Byron, Shelley, and even Keats, sank to death while young and still in their demonic stage, Heaven-storming and unreconciled with the World's Order, which they would pull down over their heads—unless Keats be the exception with his unique original harmony of soul, as if spherical. But Goethe passed through the demonic stage, came out of it,

and in the Italian Trilogy is singing of it and its solution—especially is that the theme of our present *Egmont*.

Goethe, being a poet, made his demon write poetry, which at first demonic in its defiance, finally becomes the composer of its own tragedy. Thus the poet saves himself. The universal Genius writing tragedy, shows up some finite phase of himself, and thereby transcends his own fate by portraying it to its last thrust. *Egmont* also is a confession of the author concerning his own limitation, which he could not quite overcome in writ till he had taken the Italian discipline, even if little of this can be found directly in his play.

V. Egmont as Goethe must likewise be Phileros, and hence he has to have his counterpart in a woman, who is in the present drama taken from the ranks of the people, Clara, the heroine of the play. The demonic lover, Egmont, coming into Clara's presence, demonizes her, so to speak, fills her with the same defiant power which possesses him. She has another suitor, Brackenburg, worthy, devoted, favored by the good, quiet mother, but he is the undemonic lover, hence an impossible mate for the woman in her demonic obsession for Egmont. Doubtless, if she had never met him, she would have become an honest burgher's wife, borne and

reared his many Dutch children, and have passed off life's stage in unfamed worth and unheroized of the world's literature. But now in her soul Egmont's demon has become lodged, and is working at highest intensity, which makes her greater and more heroic than even Egmont, for she has not his inactive limit of character. When he is captured by the Spanish, she summons the people to aid in his rescue, yea to rise now and throw off the oppressor's yoke, headed by Egmont, who is, however, wholly incapable of any such national deed, as little as Goethe himself was. Still the poet has endowed his best female characters with lofty traits which he himself did not possess—hence the oft-repeated remark that Goethe's women are of a higher order than his men—they are his ideals, his exemplars—*The Eternal-Womanly draws us onward*—the *us* being especially Goethe himself. So Clara is the true heroine of the play and rightly its favorite character. Still she is whelmed into the tragedy of her lover just through her demonic, death-defying love, across which also flashes momentarily another love, that of country, in the grand crisis of her people.

In this drama by way of comparison we often recall Schiller, whose *Wilhelm Tell*, placed in similar circumstances politically

with those of Egmont, makes such a different impression, and has had such a different fame. And Clara brings up the Maid of Orleans as Schiller's model of representing the heroic woman. The two poets, seen in this aspect of their work, are two sides of one greater whole, or two opposite tendencies which are destined to be united in the supreme Epoch of both.

VI. Significant is the fact that the people appear four times in the drama, being a kind of personage of the play from beginning to end. They are portrayed vividly as a mass, also separated into four or five popular types. Still, as a whole, they are listless, sodden, unheroic, too. Perchance this was Goethe's unfortunate idea of the folk, even later of his own German folk, although at times he bristled up into sharp denials of such a view. But in *Egmont* the Netherlanders are not truly shown forth as they actually were in history; they did rise against the Spanish yoke in long, national struggle and throw it off, after a contest lasting a hundred years, as it is sometimes reckoned. In this drama Alva remains the dark remorseless, irresistible power crushing Dutch liberty, but he in history failed and gave up his task. So again we see that history was but a foil for Goethe's poetry, having no right in itself, indeed no prin-

ciple. The same fact we notice in Goethe's treatment of the French Revolution which ran through so many years of his mature life; its significance he never could quite realize.

The question will always be asked why did not the poet in Italy transform his prose *Egmont* into the blank-verse of poetry, as he did with the two other dramas of the Trilogy. He was in the classical mood and was certainly master of its metrical expression. Moreover, he insisted strongly in a letter to Schiller that "all dramatic works should be rhythmical," that is, should have some form of measured melody. This declaration, however, was made several years after his Italian trip. As Goethe himself has given no grounds why he should except *Egmont* from his classic transformation in form and meter, we are compelled to dig up some reason for ourselves. First, we may note that the theme is Northern, Teutonic, anti-classic, portraying a conflict with a Latinized people who spoke a Latinized tongue and possessed a Latinized culture and civilization. But at present Goethe's face is turned southward, he is seeking to appropriate the Mediterranean life and art, he has changed for the nonce from Northerner to Southerner. Hence he could not help feeling discordant with the

purport of *Egmont*, and of itself the theme would not classicize, like *Iphigenia* or *Tasso*, both of which subjects belonged already to the soil of the South in their origin. So Goethe corrected much in his work, but could not metamorphose it into a classic drama. The same experience he had with his *Faust* which he took along and hoped to complete in Italy. How could he? For *Faust* is also Teutonic, sprung of a Northern legend and a Northern consciousness, and thus was profoundly inharmonious with Goethe's Italian atunement. So he has to bring back his *Faust* to its German home still unfinished, and wait for another epochal mood, in which he can again Teutonize his poem.

Still there is evidence that he did not have an easy time in working at his *Egmont* while in Italy. Already in January, 1787, he writes from Rome: "Now I am going to tackle *Egmont*," and he hopes soon to finish it with *Tasso* and *Faust*. But several months pass and we hear that "the fourth Act will soon be done." Still there is delay and he has to whip himself to his task, which opens not a smooth path but rather thorny. At last, however, September 5th, he can announce its completion and send it to his friends in Weimar. He adds an utterance of his great relief: "It was an unspeakably hard task, which I never

could have accomplished without an unlimited freedom of life and mind," which he found of course in Italy. But the work had to be done, even if it often went against the grain. In a later letter from Rome he emphasizes once more the difficulty. "Let anyone imagine what it means to take in hand a work which was written twelve years earlier, and to complete it without writing it over." This indicates that he followed the original prose copy going back to 1775 at Frankfort.

As before said, *Egmont* is deeply twined with *Götz* in form and significance, as well as in the time of origin. Still it shows decidedly the influence of the Weimar Epoch, during whose ten years it lay germinating, but unable to flower out. We recollect that *Götz* flung himself into rebellion against the established social order, defying even the Emperor. But *Egmont* will preserve the existing institutions of his land against the tyrannical foreign oppressor. Thus he is not a revolutionist in the sense that *Götz* is; rather is he a conservator of his country's transmitted rights. This is in accord with the institutional training which he received at Weimar after his Frankfort eruption against the ordered world. Still *Egmont* talks patriotism rather than acts it, he proclaims his people's independence, but does little for it; his

will is paralyzed by what Goethe calls the Demonic, which seems also a later elaboration. To be sure no copy has been preserved of the first Frankfort *Egmont*, or of the second Weimar *Egmont* which was probably the one which Goethe worked over in Italy. No five different redactions of *Egmont* exist as they do of *Iphigenia*, showing various gradations in its evolution. Still, compared with *Götz*, it bears the impress of Weimar. Thus it is a kind of overture starting with Frankfort, but sending repeated strains through Weimar to Italy.

Also there may be found a link of connection between the two dramas of *Egmont* and *Iphigenia at Tauris* in the characters of the two women. Both are endowed with the spirit of willing sacrifice of themselves to what they deem their supreme end, and therein are heroic. Clara gives her life unflinchingly to her love and her cause, and perishes immediately through her deed; she dies a sacrifice. But Iphigenia lives a sacrifice, and devotes the long years of banishment to the uplift of her human environment till the day dawns for her return home. Her work and character as presented by the poet we are to consider next.

IPHIGENIA AT TAURIS.

This is the only drama of the present Trilogy which is based upon a Mythus, a story elaborated by the people which shows man in some connection with the Upper Powers, the individual in relation to the providential order as conceived by the age. The Mythus of which Iphigenia is a very important member is Greek, even early Greek, having sprung originally from the primal consciousness of Greece, since it reaches back of the Trojan war into the shadowy aforetime.

When Iphigenia tells Thoas, the King of Barbary, who is wooing her for marriage: "I am of the race of Tantalus," she intends to frighten him off through the fate-smitten character of her ancestors who form a dreadful line of cruelties and impieties reaching up to the very seat of the Gods. Tantalus, son of Zeus and of a human mother, was a favorite of the Olympians, being admitted to their table, and sharing in the divine counsels and purposes, though only a mortal. But he is declared to have betrayed their secrets to men and also to have stolen nectar and ambrosia from their feasts, and to have brought the divine food and drink to our lower world. That was a great sacrilege

though a philanthropic action; the stern decree followed: Tantalus “for his pride and treachery, as the poets sing, was hurled from Jove's table down to the disgrace of old Tartarus,” the dark realm below where the other violators of Olympic majesty atone for their offenses. Iphigenia adds: “Alas! and his whole race must bear the hate of the Gods.” Thus she proclaims herself a Tantalid with a divine curse laid upon her from birth.

As the love of Thoas is not terrified by this record of her first ancestor, she continues her account of the horrors and guilty deeds done by three generations of the progeny of Tantalus—Pelops, Atreus and Thyestes, Agamemnon son of Atreus—till the line of bloody ferocies ended in herself who was sacrificed by her own father, as far as his intention went, at Aulis to the Goddess Diana. “But the Goddess was reconciled, did not wish my blood, and rescued me in a cloud.” Thus she was conveyed to Tauris in whose temple she awoke from death. “I am she herself, Iphigenia.” Thus she reveals herself along with the taint of her blood and its hereditary curse—the motive being to dissuade the barbarian King from his suit, as she wished to return to Greece, which was her heart's deepest love and longing. Still

Thoas is not deterred, he renews his proposal; if refused he threatens to relapse to his old barbarism and to sacrifice some strangers who have just arrived upon his coast. That would be quite the undoing of all her work of all these years, for truly she has been the Greek Missionary to the barbarous world.

Thus the poet in the first Act of his drama, brings down the Mythus of the Tantalids to the beginning of the Trojan War, of whose course and outcome Iphigenia knows nothing, since it has wholly taken place during her stay at Tauris. The continuation she hears in the next Act from Pylades, one of the newly arrived strangers, who has come to the temple and finds there a priestess talking Greek. She learns from him about the fall of Troy, the return of her father Agamemnon and his death at the hands of his wife Clytemnestra aided by her paramour Aegisthus. Thus she hears a new chapter of the horrors of the House of Tantalus, her mother's vengeance wreaked upon her father for her sake. In a later Act she is told of the fate of her mother slain by the son Orestes, her brother who has come to Tauris hounded by the Furies and seeking release from them by doing a work of atonement for his guilt which is to be brought about through her

mediation. Thus we are told the long vengeful story of the House of Tantalus, blood-stained especially with the gore of its own kindred.

Such is the mythical substrate of the whole drama which permeates its structure through and through into every living corpuscle of its organism. In no other poem of Goethe has a Mythus been so completely wrought out and interwoven into the fabric of his imagination. Not even *Faust*, though based on a legend of his native land, is so pervasively mythical as this old Greek tale in the hands of the poet. Moreover it seems to us the most carefully and cunningly constructed of Goethe's works. Naturally we ask why has the poet such a persistent interest in that old sanguinary record of domestic fatalities? As he never wrote anything, so he says, without its being drawn from his own deepest experience, we grope for the connection between the drama of *Iphigenia* and what lurked far down, perhaps unconsciously, in the secret depths of his being.

It is generally agreed that the conception of the work goes back to the Frankfort Quadrennium, that Epoch of his greatest creative energy. Critics have assigned its first start to the year 1776, some ten years

before its final completed form. Of its earlier stages we have no less than four different shapes upon which the investigators have spent a good deal of discussion. The first theatrical representation in prose is usually dated April 6, 1779, at Weimar, in which Goethe took the part of Orestes and Corona Schroeter that of Iphigenia. The appearance as well as the acting of Goethe in this part roused great astonishment in the audience. He threw a personal power and emotion into the role so that it was then said: Lo, he is Orestes. Ever since he has been more or less identified with that character by interpreters of the play.

Here again we impinge on the fact that this poem also is confession wrung from him by his sense of guilt, the atonement for which he seeks to obtain through his writing. Goethe, taken at his word in general, would never have portrayed Orestes pursued by the Furies unless he himself had been pursued in the same manner. In a letter of 1775 (already cited) we may hear his sigh of punishment: "Perhaps the invisible scourge of the Furies will soon lash me again from my native land." Thus he had realized in his own person the soul-harassing conception of Orestes years before the first known copy of *Iphigenia*. The thought must have been long

familiar to him, possibly from his boyhood when he read the Greek tragic poets in his father's library along with the woeful tale of Tantalus and the Tantalids. In his speech at the Shakespeare festival (October 1771) he ejaculates an admiring exclamation to the English poet: "If thou wert Orestes, how delighted would I be to play with thine the lesser part of a Pylades." Evidently the theme of his *Iphigenia at Tauris* had taken deep hold of Goethe already in his youth. More than ten years, yea more than fifteen years had this subject been fermenting in his mind, or more especially in his conscience. The facts and his own utterances, therefore, would seem to show that ever since his Strasburg time, when he met, wooed and abandoned Frederika the image of Orestes hounded by the guilt-avenging Eumenides, had lodged in his soul and could not be banned except by his pen, that wonderful instrument of his expiation through contrition, confession, and works meet for repentance, one of which works was just this confessional poem of *Iphigenia*. Hence it has taken such a significant place in his total life-poem, being read, studied, and more deeply felt than any other of his dramas, excepting *Faust*. But it is not well adapted for external representation on the stage, it is an inward-turn-

ing drama, its appeal is directly to the soul alone, being an experience of the spirit which communes with the spirit.

Undoubtedly Goethe had done no crime like a mother's murder, and so his deed, whatever it may have been, has a different character from that of Orestes. Still the offence against conscience must have been very actively present, else such throes of remorse would have little meaning. From this and other striking instances we come to the conclusion that Goethe must have had a keen sense of guilt, especially in certain directions, though he is generally regarded as little capable of the feeling of sin. But we have his word and the proof that all his literature, particularly his greatest and most convincing literature, springs from his contrite heart for some violation, which it is just the function of his artistic word to expiate. Such is doubtless the ultimate view to be taken of Goethe's writ: it is remedial, purificatory, purgatorial; the author, like Dante, goes through a realm of guilt and suffering in person, and tells of it for his own redemption and that of others perchance like him. Yet, unlike Dante, he does not relegate such a penitential journey to the future state of man, but he places it here and now in this life—a journey to be made in some form

daily, yearly by every son of Adam. Such we may deem the ultimate purpose of his books, though they have other lesser and more superficial meanings.

It was in classic Italy that *Iphigenia* received the final form in harmony with the locality and its artistic tradition. In the poet's letters from Italy we trace his strong inner push to finish just this work first. At Lake Guarda we find him already busy with it, as soon as he has descended the Alps and touched Italian soil. At Verona we get an inkling of the intensity of his Muse when he says he has written the live-long day on his poem. Finally he reports it completed at Rome in December, 1786, and sends a copy to Herder who has helped him with advice. It was published in 1787, and therewith Goethe was quit of his long brooding over the work, which he had so often rewritten. From prose it has been transformed into blank-verse, doubtless after the model of Shakespeare, and is one of the great masterpieces of versification whose deep underlying harmony is a resonance of the spirit of the poem, that of atonement and reconciliation. No Titanism, no eruption, though there is passion enough underneath the calm exterior.

And this suggests the meaning of the work in the evolution Goethe's career. It should

be taken as the artistic counterpart and contrast of the Titanic upheavals of the Frankfort Epoch. It may be true that Tantalus is not spoken of as a Titan by ancient writers, so the learned commentators declare; still he commits a Titanic offence in defiance of the Gods, and is whelmed into murky Tartarus like the other great Titans of fable. And then his progeny, the Tantalids, are colossal in their deeds of guilt, whose monstrous line reaches down to Iphigenia the priestess at Tauris. Now it is her function and object to put an end to this ever-begetting series of monstrosities, through her own life and sacrifice as well as through the expiation of the crime of Orestes. Thus Goethe poetizes his grand transition out of his former Epoch into his present classic mood of harmony and reconciliation. Moreover the mediatrix who performed for him personally this act of mediation is pointed out, also a woman, Frau Von Stein. In his letters to her he has often hinted her mediatorial function for his passion-torn life. He declares that she knew him better than he knew himself. That was, of course, in the earlier Weimar days of his love. And it was in these days that he wrought out and lived out, yea acted out his drama of *Iphigenia*, which centers upon the priestly woman whose remedial

power put an end to the curse of the Tantalids, though she herself was a Tantalid, and it would seem, a drop of the old inherited poison remained in her bosom.

This very suggestive point is indicated by Iphigenia in communing with herself (Act 4, Scene 5,) when she prays that she may not relapse to the old Titanic defiance: “May the deep hate of the old Gods, the Titans, not at last sprout afresh in my bosom against you, Olympians, and tear my tender breast with the claws of a vulture.” So she seems to identify herself with the Titans, the old revolters against Zeus and his new order. But the main fact is she feels that she can backslide, and again become herself a Tantalid, interlinking in the hate-forged chain of her family’s guilt and retribution, whose ever-repeated clash of bloody horrors she has sought to cleanse and atone “with pure hand and pure heart” by her long priestly dedication in a strange land. Still further the question arises, did Frau Von Stein ever have any such relapse, she being the supposed living model of Iphigenia in the master’s workshop? And did the poet forefeel in her character that from love she could drop back into hate, to be sure under strong provocation, and could turn from the priestly mediatrix to the cursing prophetess of ills for him and his

house? Already we have noted that she became the poet's evil-boding Cassandra after his return from Italy, that is, after this poem of *Iphigenia* had been written and printed. So we catch a strain of presentiment in regard to the poet's coming life; a vein of prophecy runs through the present drama which to us is its subtlest and most suggestive characteristic, as if he were unconsciously forecasting his own future destiny.

The best readers, or the most of them, have always selected the Hymn of the Fates (Parcae) as the deepest-toned passage in the drama, and as that portion in which the poet poured forth the full utterance of his wrought-up Genius, reaching down to his ultimate creative depths when he beheld in foreshow his own future, as well as his own Last Judgment. Listen to their ominous chant: "Let the mortal who has been exalted by the Gods fear them most," as he is already dangling on the precipices and clouds of Fate. "For if a conflict arises between him and them, down he is hurled, despised and disgraced, into the nighted domain" of Tartarus, "where he will await forever Justice, being chained in the gloomy underworld, whence the breath of smothered Titans ascends like the incense of sacrifice to them sitting at their eternal banquets on the gold-

en chairs" of Olympus. So Goethe cast a shadow of his former self in the conflict between Titan and Olympian, with a shuddering hint of the penalty. Verily he has been a kind of Tantalus himself, else he never would have written this poem, for only his personal experience could be forged through his goose quill into artistic shapes. Then comes the prophecy of the divine curse: "The Gods avert their eye of blessing from whole generations of men, and shun in the offspring the once loved lineaments of the ancestor." So the Tantalids have felt the heavy doom of the forefather, "who listens now, banned in the caverns of night" to this song "of the Fates" and "the old man thinks of child and grandchild and shakes his head." Here the Goethe of not yet forty forecasts with the seer's prophetic vision, the Goethe of eighty looking upon his own child and grandchildren and even naming them Tantalids, the progeny of Tantalus. For from what other source could his grandson, Walter Von Goethe derive that fate-laden expression of his (in a letter of 1848) calling himself "a relict of the House of Tantalus?" He as a boy doubtless heard it drop from the lips of the "old man," his grandfather, in some moment of sighful retrospect. Such, at least, is our construction of the situation.

In this same fact lies the reason why Goethe shunned the representation of this drama on the stage. He was Director of the Weimar theater, and yet he would not produce it, in spite of solicitation. Finally Schiller persuaded him, but had to take charge of its theatrical preparation throughout. In the Correspondence with Schiller, we observe with surprise the unwillingness of Goethe to have anything to do with his own great drama. "I must keep aloof from *Iphigenia*," he writes. "I do not wish to see a single rehearsal," he says with sharp emphasis. Why? We ask with wonder. Certainly, not because he was ashamed of his work on account of its unpopularity, that would not be Goethe. Some biographers say he had lost interest in it; rather the contrary, in our opinion—the work stirred in him too strong and painful an interest. So his drama had to wait fifteen years in his own theater for its first presentation, and then this took place through the persistency and labor of Schiller. He could not bear to listen to the story of Tantalus and his offspring whose imaged fate was realizing itself so terribly in his own life. He averted his face from the picture of his own deed begetting a race of Tantalids.

The same disinclination to see his

Iphigenia acted would show itself during his later life. In 1825, on the occasion of a great festival in his honor, the play was given, but he quit the theater before it was over. In 1827 he declined to witness a famous actor in the part of Orestes, excusing himself thus to his friend Zelter: "It is impossible for me to go. What good will it do me to recall the days when I felt, thought, and wrote it all." But the reason why just this drama is so painful to him he keeps hidden from his most intimate companions. The secret of Tantalus seals his lips for the sake of the living. And how could he, looking back at his fateful deed through a vista of forty years endure to listen to that dreadfully prophetic Hymn of the Fates?

Doubtless he chose the theme of *Iphigenia at Tauris* in preference to that of *Iphigenia at Aulis* as more profoundly consonant with his poetical instinct, which already felt him to be an Orestes haunted by the Furies. Also the mediation of the woman lay deep in his personal experience. Nor did the poet see the real ground for the return of the priestess to Hellas, which needed her mediatorial service as well as Tauris; witness the deeds of her royal parents as typical of the time and people. Hence no *Iphigenia at Delphi* could complete itself from Goethe's pen. Nor

did it ever seem to rise into his consciousness that in golden Mycenae, where she was born and whence she came to Aulis for her sacrifice, there was a theme for a poem to show her preparatory training for her work. Her life at Tauris pre-supposes a long prelude, which did not involve him personally.

Thus the mentally vigilant reader, looking backwards and forwards from Goethe's one Iphigenia, may catch the outlines of three others going before or following after this central figure, who is but a single phase of the total mythus. But also we should behold the poem inwardly, and mark its prophetic character as its truly immortal soul. For in it the poet becomes the seer of himself, foreshadowing his own future in the most intimate strand of his existence.

But there are other very important and edifying points of view for fully appropriating Goethe's Iphigenia. We delight in contemplating her as the prototype of the mediatorial woman, who has suffered much, yet has transfigured her suffering into a blessing for herself and still more for others.

She has endured not death, but what she probably deems worse—a long exile from her native Hellas to a barbarous land in which she has performed the function of the humane priestess and civilizer during many

years. Thus she casts an image of all Greek culture in its influence upon the ruder non-Greek nations of the world. In her story we catch a glimpse of Hellas imparting her civilization to backward peoples. Goethe called himself often the Northern barbarian, who went to the South for the Hellenic spirit. Even in the ancient drama of Euripides such a missionary idea glimmers through to the watchful eye. But in the reproduction of the German poet this character of Iphigenia comes out far more emphatically. For the author himself is now the recipient of Iphigenia's gift and may well deem himself the beneficiary of her sacrifice. The old Greek poet, Euripides, could not feel such gratitude to his heroine.

Still he utters very suggestively the value of such sacrifice to the sufferer herself. It becomes her true salvation. In the most striking passage of the ancient drama (*Iphigenia at Aulis*, line 1440) she cries out in exalted prophecy to her mother who deemed her lost: "But I am not lost, I am saved." Hardly has the world yet reached this lofty pinnacle of conduct. Goethe vivifies such an Iphigenia more completely than Euripides, but beyond Goethe there is still room for a higher fulfillment.

The eternal charm of the Iphegenia legend

in its ancient and modern forms is its similarity to the story of Christ. To lose life is to find it is instruction given by both. Then the missionary spirit, in spite of their different ways, is common to both. In each case the innocent soul gives itself for the guilty. Greek Iphigenia, as a free-will offering, is borne to savage Tauris, where she becomes the embodiment as well as the doctrine of her own sacrifice. Thus the old sages and seers of Greece were conscious of their universal mission.

On the subject of Iphigenia the ancient Greeks have left numerous scattered hints, but it was Euripides who concentrated the somewhat drifting legend in two plays which have become immortal (*Iph. at Aulis* and *Iph. at Tauris*). Mankind has refused to let such a striking conception of its own supreme ideal pass into oblivion; the result is a long line of Iphigenia dramas and poems down to the present day. It may be said that this Mythus has shown its inner power by evolving with civilization down the ages, and reflecting the same in many works of art (for a much more complete account of the Iphigenia story, and its place in the world's literature, see our *Agamemnon's Daughter*, p. 196, etc.)

We may next consider more specially Goe-

the's treatment in its general significance and in its very distinct personal relation to himself. For in her he saw, we repeat, the mediatorial woman projecting a phase-of his own deepest experience into an ancient tale. This character of hers we shall emphasize in particular points.

I. She, through her own spiritual gift, has shown the power to mediate herself from her fatal inheritance and environment. She knows and says that she belongs to the guilty House of Tantalus, whose bloody vengeful horrors form the most gruesome chapter of Greek mythology. Revenge upon revenge, and retribution upon retribution pile up the mountain of its tragedies. But Iphigenia through herself, through her sacrifice and devotion to humanity, has turned off the curse of her kin and become her own mediator with herself and with the Divine Order through her long trial of priestly service.

II. She has mediated the barbarous world from remorseless savagery to a higher life and civilization through her example and doctrine. She has even transformed the old cruel religion of the Taurians, who sacrificed to their pitiless deity the man cast by shipwreck or other chance upon their shore. Thus she is the missionary of humanity to all inhumanity. As she has mediated herself out

of her ferocious blood, so she mediates the inborn ferocity of an uncivilized people.

III. And now comes her supreme act of mediation in Goethe's drama. She has to mediate her own brother Orestes pursued by the Furies of his special deed of guilt which is also that of the House of Tantalus generally. As she has redeemed herself from the deep-seated taint of her family, so she is now to redeem her next of kin who is still under the doom of his own curse and that of his House. Such is the heaven-wide contrast: both brother and sister are Tantalids, of one blood and under one judgment, but stand at the extreme opposite points of the spiritual universe—the reconciled and the damned. But reconciliation cannot be truly itself till it reconcile its other, now its very brother. So Iphigenia mediates Orestes and brings to an end the curse of her house.

IV. So far Goethe carries us in his internal way; also Euripides reaches the same point, though in a much more external manner. Thus both the ancient poet and the modern one indicate the healing of Orestes, and therewith the return of Iphigenia to Hellas. But when she gets back home, has she nothing to do? We hold that here a new work begins for her: nothing less than the regeneration of all Hellas which is more or less in the

condition of the Tantalids given up to revenge and hence hounded by the Furies. Later Hellenic history, especially during the Peloponnesian War, show both the character and the deeds of the whole people, which call up the scourging Eumenides, like those of Orestes. In fact every Greek was an Orestes of some sort.

It should be added that the truth of this way of mediating man's guilt has been not merely questioned but stoutly denied. Iphigenia cannot set free her brother as the murderer of his mother, she cannot ban the Furies of such a heinous deed. The church naturally says that true absolution can come only through priestly mediation invoking the intercession of the Mediator himself, the Son of God, the source of all true forgiveness. On the other hand we may hear the disbeliever declaring that Orestes had done the deed inexpiable on earth and in Heaven, that he cannot repent and live, his sole absolution can take place only through his own free-willed death (See Engel's *Goethe*, p. 292). Suicide is the one atonement of matricide. The act of Orestes is tragic and cannot be mediated, he must perish. Yet old Aeschylus gave him expiation at last through the Court of the Areiopagus, a politico-religious tribunal.

Goethe wrote long afterward (1827) a

verse which pertains just to this act of Iphigenia: "Pure humanity can atone (or mediate) all human shortcomings (*Gebrechen*)."¹ It is contended, however, that such a work of expiation and forgiveness is as miraculous as the external command of the Goddess in Euripides, or as the Christian process of repentance and restoration. So we record the denial of the mediatorial act of the drama: Iphigenia as merely human, as simply an individual, cannot absolve the guilty one—that can be accomplished only through the saving institution or through death. Thus we may hear from two opposite sides the negation of Iphigenia's priestly or reconciling function, which she is supposed to have derived from the long service of the Goddess.

Still a great majority of the deeper readers have come to accept Iphigenia for what she stands in Goethe's poem, which at its best inculcates the mediatorial power existent in every human being. Every man can become a Christ, and that is the true imitation of the Savior, namely to save. Of course Goethe's work was not understood at its first appearance, it had to train its readers and is still training them. At present it is much studied in the schools at home and abroad; it is truly a pivotal utterance of his life-poem.

TASSO.

Again must be emphasized that statement so often made before: all of Goethe's important works are confessions, wherein he sets forth his spirit's sufferings and his recovery through artistic utterance. So he himself has declared in his Autobiography, written some twenty years or more after his *Tasso*, which also expresses the same fact in a highly poetic way. "A God has given me the power to tell what I suffer"; such we may deem the pivotal sentence of *Tasso*, which throws its light backward and forward over Goethe's whole life. Other men "turn dumb" in their sorrows, but the Muse has endowed him with the gift of transfiguring his tribulations of life into poetry, and thereby of finding his heart's alleviation. *Tasso* we may, therefore, expect to be a record of his outer and inner experiences at a throeful turn of his career. So it was regarded by all his acquaintances at Weimar when it first appeared. Herder, perhaps his most intimate interpreter, had hardly read the first scene, according to the report of his wife, when he burst out: "Goethe has to idealize himself and write everything from what he has experienced." Speaking to Eckermann against foisting an

idea upon the work, the poet unfolded his own idea of it: "I had Tasso's life and mine own, I put the two peculiar characters together, and so arose the image of Tasso, in prosaic contrast to Antonio, for whom also I had models. The other relations of life, love, and the court, were quite in Weimar as in Ferrara. Thus I can rightly say of my poetic presentation: it is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh." Here the poet certainly interprets himself: Ferrara is an idealized photograph of Weimar, especially as Goethe had experienced it during his first Decennium in that little capital. But we should add that it has something that means a good deal more, namely, the element of universality which belongs to all times and places. Tasso's conflict in both its phases is man's, particularly the ideal-seeking man's, he being not confined to any city or nation.

Hitherto the poet has revealed himself in the multitudinous shapes of his characters, who, however, veil his talk in a kind of disguise. But now the leading character is the poet himself speaking in his own name and right, and portraying his own conflicts. That is, the poet poetizes himself. Goethe previously has been the secret demigod making his little worlds and filling them with his people. Hence we have there to detect him in

his work and to drag him forth to the light. But in his *Tasso* he introduces the world-maker himself in his environment, and unmasks him to the very soul. Thus Goethe tells on himself at his confessional, which is his creative literature. The collisions as well as the dangers of the poetic temperament, yea its temptations and transgressions are narrated unsparingly. Goethe once designated his *Tasso* as showing "the disproportion of talent with life," talent here signifying probably poetic genius, which feels itself hampered on all sides by the existent order. Such was his own condition, especially during the Frankfort Quadrennium, when he would burst over all limits "to the Infinite" in his Titanic mood. So Tasso has his bitter struggles, outer and inner, reflecting undoubtedly Goethe's own. But the poem does not stop at this point. It mediates the poet in his two main conflicts, the one with the prose of life and the other with the anguish of an impossible love. Else he were verily tragic, which is the view taken by numerous readers and critics. But at the end of the play he declares himself saved from shipwreck, and he is reconciled with Antonio, the man of affairs hitherto his foe. "So the sailor is rescued by the rock on which his ship went to pieces." But more deeply remedial is his poetic art, which

enables him to transfigure his suffering and obtain relief and redemption. Tasso is thus at last self-mediated, wherein this poem shows a difference from *Iphigenia*, in which the woman is the mediatrix of the Fury-pursued Orestes. But in the present drama the woman does not succeed in reconciling the poet with himself and with the world, though two women try it, each in her own way, and fail. To be sure, Tasso ascribes his power of telling and thus mediating his woes to a God, whom, however, he communes with and voices. Thus he must essentially perform the act himself. Such we may deem the chief advance of *Tasso* upon the previous drama of *Iphigenia*.

If we make the personal application which always underlies Goethe's poetic characters, we see that no longer Frau Von Stein can mediate him in his new stage as she once did in the Weimar Epoch. He had already forefelt some such limit in her power when he secretly took flight from her presence to Italy. Still in *Iphigenia* her previous mediatorial influence is celebrated, and fully recognized and brought to a close. But the poet must at last mediate himself through his own supernal gift of genius. So he transcends his former mediatrix, who is unable to heal his malady, like Tasso's, of emotion and imagi-

nation. In his soul he must become self-remedial, limit-transcending through his own divine endowment; his poetic nature must cure its own wounds, like the spear of Achilles. In the poem this process is briefly suggested rather than explicitly wrought out to its fulness; hence many do not see it or disregard its significance, deeming the work to be really a tragedy.

There is another fact in this connection which cannot be omitted. The composition of *Tasso* was completed in July, 1789, his first meeting with Christiane in the Weimar Park was in July 1788. Thus for the whole year during which he was bringing his drama to its last finish, he had begun to feel the ban which Weimar society visited upon him on account of his open violation of the Family. This was his deed which isolated him more than anything else, more than his Olympian manner and his changed style of writing. Hence the reader often feels a peculiar mood of loneliness in *Tasso*, who receives so many rebuffs from the world, being driven back upon himself by Antonio and also by the Princess, and being put in confinement by the Duke. Though the *Roman Elegies* express the sensuous delights of the poet's life with Christiane, there must have been another side to the picture when the transgressor stepped

forth into the community whose deepest law he had defied. We may hear in the suffering Tasso many an echo of the solitary Goethe isolated by his act in his own social environment. Such is the new fate which Goethe the lover has brought upon himself, and which will weave a tragic tale through his whole life-poem. We may catch its first shadow in the sorrows of Tasso, though the circumstances be very different in the case of the two poets.

Indeed, Goethe afterwards was inclined to criticise himself as having put too much of his own into his work: "I had transfused into my *Tasso* more of mine own heart's blood than was fitting." Hence it comes that he avoided seeing it represented on the stage, as it would call up his past sufferings. In his old age (1827) he declared that he had never read *Tasso* through in its printed form, and that in the theatre he had heard only fragments of it. Still it was often given on the Weimar stage. Even more intense was his avoidance of his own *Iphigenia*, and for a deeper reason, already given.

I. This drama we place as the third of the Italian Trilogy, as it was written or rather re-written, in the Italian mood, and was churned over a good deal in Italy. It sends its roots back to the Frankfort Epoch, even

to the poet's boyhood in the paternal home where he read Tasso in a German translation, and also in the original it seems. But during the Weimar Epoch the life of Tasso came home to him with a new meaning, for he felt the marvelous identity of the Italian poet's situation with his own. He must then have deeply realized that Tasso, the poet at Ferrara, was Goethe the poet at Weimar. So he starts, in accord with his literary bent, to uttering his most vital experience in a poem. Already in 1780 we see by a brief jotting in his diary that the subject was fermenting strongly in him, and was beginning to take form; in November, 1781, two acts were done, but it refused to complete itself for a good reason: he was still in the toils of Frau Von Stein, and that situation was all that this first dramatic attempt could portray. But the finished drama, as we have it, turns finally on the breach with her love, though setting forth in great amplitude the significance of this love for the poet and his career.

In its early form, the drama was, as he says, written in prose like *Iphigenia*, though no copy of this original fragment has yet been found. But obeying that curious forecast of his coming poetic renascence, he took his unfinished and as yet unfinishable *Tasso* in manuscript to Italy, along with his other

torsos; and there he lived out and hence could write out its fulfilment. When his Italian Journey was nearing its end, he says in a letter to the Duke: "As the fascination which first drew me to this subject sprang from my innermost nature, so my effort, now undertaken to bring it to a close, tacks onto the end of my Italian career." He connects his separation from Rome with that of Tasso from his loved princess at Ferrara, and he begins to knead over the passages of the drama which involve the situation and its emotion with "a peculiar delight." Hence he motives "the painful strand which runs through the whole piece." While winding around in Italy on the way homeward, he composes, various portions of the poem, as the mood stirs him. He seems to have written it backwards in part; at least, it is recorded that the last scenes were composed at Florence in the Boboli Gardens; then the fourth Act, and even the third at Weimar on his return, the whole being finished in 1789 and published the next year.

Thus we observe that it stands third in the order of its evolution and of its completion among the dramas of the Italian Trilogy. It has a note of pensive reminiscence all the way through as of a happy time past and transcended. It is Goethe in his present state

looking back and brooding over his long relation to Frau Von Stein. Her love was for him a deeply disciplining and reconciling principle for many years, which, however, has shown its limitations, and these he must now surmount or perish as a soul unfulfilled of its true mission. Such is his confession in this drama: the most poignant suffering was his, but it had to be met, being the pang of a new birth for him. Nay, it had to be poetically recorded in all its fullness if he were ever to get relief from his pain and find atonement.

In fact, it is just this redemption through poetic utterance which Tasso unfolds and reveals in his long and fearful trial, and thus mirrors Goethe at his deepest. The pivotal, quite untranslatable lines of the poem have often been recognized: “Though man turns dumb in his anguish, a God has given me the power to say what I suffer.” This might be taken as the literary thought of Goethe’s whole life: mine is the God-given voice which taps in me the last sources of sorrow and lets them rise into words for my relief and reconciliation. So his writings are his soul-stricken confessions, and for him literature is mediatorial, verily its truest and deepest function. In his late autumnal days he cites the above-mentioned lines as the motto to

his verses in which a God gave him again to say what he suffered in his love for Ulrike, whereby he was restored and lived.

The play of Goethe's *Tasso* is not, therefore, a tragedy, as it is often called and regarded, but its total sweep means the mediation of the otherwise tragic man through his poetry. Over and over again Goethe has intimated that his gift of poetic utterance has saved his life or at least has lifted him out of the slough of mortal agony and despair, so violently have his emotions torn him to pieces within. Tasso, after terrific convulsions of feeling, which rage through love and folly, reaching even a psychic insanity, is cured by the divine gift of the Muse, which enables him to throw into speech the malady of his Genius. On the other hand, this play is not a comedy in the ordinary sense; it is indeed a most serious, sombre piece, which, however, is redemptive of its hero. Thus it belongs to a class which we find also in Shakespeare, namely, a tragic soul destined to perish, mediated through sorrow for its transgression, followed by confession and repentance. But Shakespeare has nowhere portrayed the poet as mediating his own tragedy just through his God-sent word of deliverance. Yet the reader often feels that Shakespeare in writing *Hamlet* freed his own

soul of Hamlet's tragedy, and especially in elaborating so fully *Antony and Cleopatra* he won relief from "the perilous stuff" of his own bosom. But in *Tasso* we behold the poet poetizing his own doom as it were, and thereby escaping from it, depicting his own diseased imagination in all its frantic contortions, and with such medicine curing himself of his poetic malady.

It is no wonder that Goethe had a tendency to connect his *Tasso* with his *Werther*, of which it is an "intensified" copy, says Goethe to Eckermann in a conversation citing the view of the French critic Ampère, who has also noted that "in the first ten years of my Weimar service I accomplished as good as nothing," and that "despair drove me to Italy," where with new creative power "I seized upon the story of Tasso in order to free myself of the painful memories of Weimar." Also, Goethe notes and praises this very significant thought in his French appreciator who "points out the relation between the created product and its creator"; but especially "he judges the different works of the poet as the different fruits of different Epochs in the life of their author." Suggestive are these remarks as indicating how Goethe, now an old man, looks back at his own biography and intimates the way in which

it should be written, namely, with emphasis upon its Epochs.

II. The first thing, though not the deepest, to be grasped in this dramatic conception is the opposition between the two characters of Tasso and Antonio. This opposition is what Goethe seeks to reconcile from beginning to end. Tasso is, of course, the poet in the midst of the business world and of state affairs, which have their right and must be looked after by the man especially trained to their administration, who is thus Antonio, a worldling doubtless, but indispensable. Tasso, on the other hand, is the dreamer living in his own ideal realm, the fabrication of his brain; he is extremely sensitive and subjective, and easily becomes the victim of his own fancies; he has been praised and coddled at the Court, especially by its two leading women, till he can endure no limitation, not even his own; the exclusive poetical habit has so etherealized him, that he has lost his relation to the solid world of reality and takes the fictions of his imagination as the facts of life. Thus he shows the mental malady which may come of a one-sided devotion to poetry, without the corrective of practical affairs. Still he is the genius to whom the Muse whispers her choicest message; therein he stands unique in a divine endowment. Hence he is

the favorite of the Court, its supreme ornament, the like of whom no other Court of Italy at that time can show, the Kohinoor diamond, the only one in the world. The Duke appreciates the treasure and seeks in every way to keep it, and even to secure it more firmly. So he has to put up with much in magnanimous patience from the wild careerings of his Pegasus-mounted singer.

Quite the opposite, both in temper and education, is the prosaic hard-headed Secretary of State, Antonio Montecatino, who indeed in vacant hours can trifle a little with poetry, as a rather idle amusement. Hence he likes Ariosto as a pretty fabler and spinner of fanciful romances, whom he praises in secret contrast to Tasso, who, of course, gets irritated. But Antonio is the practical man, whose life has been to deal with practical men, whose soul is indurated in utility and can grasp only finite ends, wherein lies his ultimate conviction. An indispensable man, with his part in the world's order certainly; but he gets to thinking that he is the totality of it, and so scoffs at the other half of the universe, and its representative in the poet Tasso, who repays contempt with contempt and something more, for we shall behold the ideal drawing its literal blade upon the real.

Thus we have the conflict which envelops

the whole poem embodied in two personages. What shall we call it? In its immediate form it is Prose against Poetry, Imagination fighting the Fact, the Supersensible clashing with the Sensible, the subjective underworld boiling up against the objective overworld—and still further we might categorize the battling dualism. But let the culmination be told at once: after a furiously fought word-contest, Tasso uncontrolled pulls his sword upon Antonio the self-controlled, to settle the world-old difficulty just there—when suddenly the Duke appears, stops the combat and sends the poet, caught in the act, to his room under arrest. Thus a power over both brings a truce, after which begins the attempt of the drama to heal the heart-deep scission of the two antagonists, or we may say to mediate the collision between the two men of two different worlds.

Here again we may see an intimate confession of Goethe himself thrown out into his art. The poet, passing from his creative epoch at Frankfort into his official life at Weimar, is plunged suddenly from the heights of imagination into rude actuality; his Muse hitherto ranging in freedom, has to get into harness and has to work at earth's tyrannous tasks; for ten years and more his servitude (like that of the God Apollo to the mortal monarch Admetus) lasted till finally

the deity in him broke his chains and fled to Italy for a new liberty and redemption. All officialdom had risen in hostility to the advent of the poet at Weimar; not one but many Antonios showed animosity and jealousy, but he put them down in the end, though at the cost of his genius, which, however, was through such a training to burst forth in new splendor. Now this very poem has in it Goethe looking backward to his testful discipline of life's prosaic drudgery, and is a record of his inner upheavals. To us Tasso is Goethe's internality turned outward in poetic confession; the love, the agony, yea the nagging suspicion and jealousy of Tasso unroll a vivid panorama of Goethe's underworld in his strife at Weimar with not only one but many Antonios, who abounded there in officialdom.

But we have to add that Goethe not only conquered Antonio, but appropriated him; in fact, he became Antonio also in himself, the man of affairs, making his own completely the business consciousness, and sucking out of it whatever worth it had. He must be the whole man Goethe, not the half-man Tasso, though so beautifully poetic, nor the half-man Antonio, so skillful in all practical matters. Thus in himself he has harmonized their collision, but only after the toughest kind of a battle, of which this poem is the

idealized account. Now the process of the poet Goethe, here the whole man, is that he splits himself into the two parts of himself in his former conflict, and projects them into characters who are also existent individuals whom he actually knew at Weimar, and whom he reads of as living at Ferrara hundreds of years ago. Only the total Goethe in Italy could have projected these characters and their conflict as stages of his former Self. And we can trace the same evolution in the total Shakespeare who through the experience of life came to hold in his personality his entire dramatic population.

Leonore, the Countess, the keenest-witted personage of the drama, has hit off this peculiar mental division of one entire soul into two different men (III. 2). She declares that Nature cast the twain, Tasso and Antonio, into opposites because "she could not weld them into a single man," such as is Goethe, who probably took this view of himself, and applied it also to the two women of the drama, who, different as they are in character, are unified in one trait, that of loving Tasso; both of them also seek in quite opposite manners to mediate the recalcitrant super-sensitive poet with his environment and with himself.

III. This peculiar device, accordingly, of

halving a whole man into two opposite counterparts, each of which is a personage, is also employed in the two women, both of them characteristically called by the same name Leonore, which, however, separates into two family titles. Princess Leonore of Este, sister of the Duke, and Countess Leonore Sanvitale may be deemed two sides of one whole woman, and in other ways are the female reflection of the two males. The one Leonore (the Countess) is the designing woman with the subtlest insight into the weakness of those about her; her expressions concerning people and things are the keenest and brightest in the drama; Goethe puts into her mouth the most exquisite lines on poetry and on poets; she has wit, epigrammatic terseness, and usually gives the best advice on the various emergencies which arise. There is, no doubt, too, that she takes special delight in exercising her power. She has a husband and son, both of them absent and never appearing but once for a moment in the field of her consciousness. She is accordingly wife and mother, but these relations seem quite to have dropped out of her life at Ferrara; she is seen as the untrammeled individual exploiting her unique gifts to her own pleasure. Then is to be added the fact that she is in love with Tasso after her fashion, which is

not very deep, but is gratifying to her ambition, for she wishes somehow to get control of the famous young poet and direct him in her leading-strings. Cool calculation is her trait, yet coupled with genuine admiration, and a practical side which hastens to help people out of difficulty. Tasso does not quite like her, for he complains that he always feels her intention beneath her act, and her inherent doubleness repels him.

There has been a good deal of discussion among Goethe commentators concerning the original model at the Weimar court for Leonore Sanvitale. Some have thought that the Duchess Amalia, mother of Karl August was the prototype. This is very doubtful for a number of reasons. The character is not unusual, Goethe must have met a good deal of this sort of femininity in his forays. We believe that the Countess reveals the secret of her own identity when she implies that the two characters, Antonio and Tasso, are opposite sides or phases of one man; this is also the case with Leonore Sanvitale, who forms one woman with her counterpart. It would not be hard to show that *Frau Von Stein* held both these opposing characters in her own one Self.

The female counterpart of the Countess Leonore, symmetrical yet opposite, is the

Princess Leonore. A profoundly emotional and sincere nature is hers, trained by long suffering and the sternest discipline of life, which has now mounted up to quite a sum of years. Perhaps her deepest and most winning trait is her mediatorial character, finest fruitage of her much-tried existence; she will harmonize the collisions around her, especially that of the unhappy ideal soul in its conflict with the merciless reality. It is on this side that she is so attractive to Tasso and indeed furnishes to his life what he completely lacks, adjustment of the inner to the outer world. The poet flies to her as his missing part, and the result is a unity of souls at their primal fountain, in spite of the obstacle of rank and age. Their love is mutual, but it has a fatal birth-mark upon it, for it can never blossom out into the flower of marriage. Still the Princess will keep the young man for herself and detain him at the Court of Ferrara if possible, wherein she shows the last selfishness of love. It is at this point that between the two Leonores an antagonism shows itself, secret and suppressed indeed, but active, which may be felt already in the first scene of the play. She will try to mediate the sensitive and irascible poet with the conditions of life at court through their mutual oneness, through love; but this is just what Tasso can

least control in himself; at the culminating moment of passion he tries to clasp her to his bosom, violates at its most sensitive point the courtly propriety which she had tried to instil into him, and now he has to leave. On the other hand, the Princess, in spite of her strong emotion, has revealed that love is not the ultimate principle of her nature, she is not ready to make the final offering to it, and so she too is rejected, or rather rejects herself and vanishes. There is a love still deeper than hers, she cannot be the last mediator of Tasso.

It may be added that here Goethe calls up his *Werther* in depicting a situation of impossible love. The passion is present with full intensity in both cases, but how different the expression! Phileros has been in Italy and has become classicized, yea formalized, into courtly ways. Still the old volcano is in him and breaks forth into one sudden eruption—that uncourtly act which undoes his love but saves him, driving him really to his self-redemption.

Much ingenuity has been spent by German commentators in trying to identify this high-born personage with women of Goethe's environment at Weimar. Our view is that the Princess is the Frau Von Stein disguised in the mask of the Duchess Louise. Undoubt-

edly many points can be picked out which do not fit either person. But that is a part of the disguise. The attitude of the Princess toward Goethe and her place in his inner life can be paralleled surprisingly in many passages from his Letters to Frau Von Stein. This has been generally recognized. But the second important fact in this connection is that the other Leonore is the other Frau Von Stein, that is, the other side of her total womanhood, for she too had abundance of artifice, calculation, even courtly intrigue interwoven with a strongly emotional and reconciling nature. She had also a genuine intense love for her poet in response to his tempestuous outbursts, and sought to calm him into social and especially courtly proprieties, which he would at times break over. And the final fact is also true of her: Goethe at last brushed against the limit of her love, and mid mighty resurgences of passion resolved to quit her and flee to Italy. She could not mediate him ultimately with his highest genius, with his supreme aspiration—he had at last to mediate himself through his Muse, as is reflected in Tasso at the close of the drama. So the Muse is ultimately the ideal woman who mediates him (*Das Ewig-Weibliche*). And we hold that the two Leonores are the two halves which Goethe had ex-

perienced in the double nature of Frau Von Stein, neither of which could bring to him complete reconciliation. So each of the Leonores, seeking to mediate the poet in her way, fails at Ferrara and fails at Weimar. He must go back to his God-given creative power, to the utterance of his Genius, for his blessing.

In our judgment, at this point lies the distinctive fact of the play, which indeed might be wrought out to greater fulness and clearness than we find it here. Tasso is thrown back upon himself for his final meditation; is he equal to the new crisis of his life? We think that he is, and that the author shows him so; the poet is going to reveal the poet not destroyed by love, but able to mediate love's deepest conflicts and live. Herein Tasso is not a *Werther*, but a decided advance upon the early novel. Still many a reader holds that the poet makes the poet tragic, never again to return to Ferrara or Weimar.

Such are the two sets of characters, each set composed of two people of the same sex, but of opposite natures; each set forming one whole personality which splits in twain. Then there is another fact of the poetic organism: the four form two pairs opposite in sex; Antonio shows his attachment to Leon-

ore, the Countess, who coquets with him in order to attain her deeper end of winning the control of Tasso. Still this sexed pair have certain decided traits in common: both are designing and dissembling of their design, keen to perceive and use human weakness, and can indulge in light amatory sport. They are thus drawn in emphatic contrast to the two other lovers, Tasso and the Princess. But Love is nowhere the triumphant mediator in this drama nor, on the other hand, the tragic destroyer. Phileros is taught a great lesson; having run up against an obstacle, he is not to kill himself, but to mediate himself through the deepest principle of his nature, his poetic genius. Werther could not do this, for he was no poet, but only the lover. Richard Wagner, who was also a mighty lover, indeed the very Phileros of music, has left on record his view of this drama: "for the one who sees to the bottom there is here properly one conflict, that between Tasso and the Princess. To the deep-looking mind the conflict between Antonio and Tasso is of less interest." Very true; still this conflict is not one of life and death, for the poet, though prostrated in the struggle, gets up again, reconciling himself through the self-portrayal of his defeat by means of his art.

Thus *Tasso* is the drama of the artist him-

self, who makes his art the instrument of his spiritual salvation. True it is that art should also furnish the means of bodily sustenance to the man who practices it; but that is the case with every handicraft. Perhaps the best lesson to be won from this work is that every writer who realizes the worth of his vocation, employs it not merely to earn his bread and butter, but to save his soul from perdition. Every book that has ultimate value shows the purgatorial landmark of its author in his struggle against the fall of man, and his triumph over some fate-drawn limit of his own nature. Goethe has often told us how he has rescued himself from his own Furies by his power of self-utterance in poetry. So every man is to elevate his vocation, however humble, into the way of his redemption. Otherwise, he is going to live in Hell-fire his whole life, however it may be in the future.

All this, we may repeat, is hardly more than glimpsed in *Tasso* at the very close, but we shall see more of it in later works.

The Trilogy. It is worth while again to emphasize the fact that the three foregoing dramas are intimately bound together by many links, and form what we call a Trilogy. They run quite parallel in origin, development, and completion, overarching the poet's past creative life from Frankfort, through

Weimar, to Italy. Thus they impart a striking lesson in his evolution, and take their place as a significant component of his life-poem which we are trying to mark out in its main outlines.

Separately they should be read, and then put together as one work or one supreme manifestation of Goethe's genius, which lies between and connects his earlier outburst in *Götz* and *Werther*, and his later mature masterpieces, *Meister* and *Faust*. They realize and conclude certain incipient phases of the Frankfort Epoch in which they have budded, but they are also prophetic of much which lies as yet unborn, in the poet's future. They are strictly held within dramatic bounds, hence we feel in them all a confinement or limitation compared to the younger or older Goethe. He keeps inside the prescribed limits of his dramatic art, one of the immediate results of his classic Italian training, which he will later transcend.

Still not one of the three is a good acting-play, each is lacking in the external requirements. They are inner dramas made for the soul's stage; the scenic effects move on the mind's retina, less on the eye's. Even *Egmont*, the most boisterous action of the three, appeals more to the reader than to the spectator, who has no time to go back and reflect

upon niceties of idiom, of character, of organization. Still less can he detect the real underlying personality, namely, Goethe himself in one of his confessions disguised as Egmont or Orestes or Tasso. All this demands an inward-turning, not outward.

Their rapid production indicates that Goethe has recovered his creative power in and through Italy, from his long Weimar paralysis. Freed of the grinding routine of officialdom, of a fateful love, and of an oppressive nature laden with fog, cloud and cold, his Genius rises from its living grave to a fresh resurrection. Thus his Italian environment gives him just the spiritual food he craves and stimulates him to life's renewal. The diagnosis of his case was correct, as well as the prescribed medicine for those "physico-moral ills" which sickened his productive energy in Germany. In these three dramas, then, we behold the giant springing up from his prostration and again taking possession of his true birthright.

The classicized form of two of them, *Iphigenia* and *Tasso*, is shown externally in the meter, this being the Goethean transformation of Shakespeare's blank-verse, which had been known to our poet from youth, but poetically left untried till he reached the classic atmosphere of Italy. One queries, why this

long delay in finding such a manifest poetic implement? The fact is that English blank-verse, which came to Shakespeare in its early freshness, was a product of the Renaissance, and this chiefly belongs to Italy. Somehow Goethe felt himself at the fountain-head of a new metrical form, and was first stirred to reproduce it on Italian soil, saturating it deeply with the harmonies of his own soul. Thus *Iphigenia* and *Tasso* have a metrical power which is unique even in Goethe, and it may be added, in literature. Such is their first and most permanent charm—their wooing words seem to caress the thought in measured cadences of manifold harmony. This poetic music seems to have been imparted directly to Goethe by melodious Italy, for never afterwards could he quite recover its soulful strain. For instance, the blank-verse of his *Natural Daughter*, written some years later, has largely lost the Italian musical witchery of the two dramas composed in the echoes of the classic land.

We have already noted that the three leading men of these plays rise in gradation till they culminate in *Tasso*, the self-mediated poet. In like manner the three leading women, Clara, Iphigenia, and the Princess, may be compared in regard to their power of mediation. But underneath all these charac-

ters is the one, Goethe himself at his confessional, and he is giving utterance to that deepest element of his nature, love. Phileros is writing these dramas for the alleviation of his past conflicts still throbbing painfully in the present.

But now drops down into his life startlingly a fresh violation involving a deeper transgression than any yet it has committed, and therewith a heavier and longer penalty. Thus Phileros starts a wholly new strain in this fate-recording life-poem of his, already quite diversified.

II.

Goethe's Living Drama.

We have just been contemplating Goethe's written drama, the Trilogy, which poetizes salient lines of his past career and which rises up mountainous about midway in the total sweep of his fourscore years and more. But now we are to set forth his unwritten drama, making it an essential part of his entire life-poem, which was lived by him as well as lettered in his books. In fact this unwritten drama of his became the hidden source of much that he afterwards wrote; but he himself was its continuous actor as long as he lived, and he played it before the whole world

and all time with a gigantic defiance and mightiness. In one view it is a perpetual tragedy, whose unique tragic hero is the poet himself who in the very clutch of Fate reveals himself the Fate-compeller of his own life's tragedy.

So we have now come to the most singular action of the poet during his entire career, the best-known occurrence pertaining to him, and repeated by many tongues whose brains have little or no acquaintance with his writings. Phileros, the lover, aye the lover of Love, is now led by the ruling passion of his nature to commit the offence which turns his very love to a tragedy never-ending while his breath holds out, and always getting more and more actively interwound with his deepest being. The result is that Goethe himself, after his Italian Journey till his last pulse-beat, becomes on one side of his existence a tragic character, yea the chief tragic character in his own life-poem, and as such we have now to introduce him at this point. We call it a life-tragedy because it was alive and going-on, not an houred drama which he wrote out and finished for the stage, or for the reader, like the three which we have just considered. It was an ever-living, stayless action which continued recurring all his days with manifold repetition and variation. And we

must add that this tragedy did not conclude with his death, but kept up its fatal swoop afterward, clutching even his grandchildren, as they recognized and said. Thus he makes himself a Tantalus through his sin against the Divine Order, and begets a family of Tantalids. Blame him not, excuse him not, but let the fact tell itself in its full round of transgression and suffering, of guilt and punishment, of Hell and Heaven.

Goethe, solitary, feeling himself neglected and isolated, was taking a walk in the Weimar Park less than a month after his return from Italy, for which he was probably in a state of deep longing, being separated from its art, its genial sunshine, and its free life. Then Phileros at Weimar had no love, the light of his existence; Frau Von Stein, paled and crumpled with the years, was transcended; the other lesser stars of his former time gave no sheen. He, a man in his physical prime, at the age of thirty-eight, rejuvenated and indeed reborn (he said) by the trip to Italy could not help brooding over Rome and its treasures; but especially with the energy of youthful imagination he called up his Roman love-life, and its central figure who has already flitted before under the name of Faustina. And then who appears to him just at the right moment in all the living fullness

of flesh and blood with red cheeks and sparkling eyes, as it were leaping into the place of that empty far-away phasm, and accosting him with the tender voice of supplication? Yes, who is it—for of all the incidents of Goethe's career, amatory and otherwise, this is to have the farthest-reaching, deepest-searching consequences.

Her name is Christiane Vulpius, a young woman just turned of three and twenty, who crosses the poet's path at this conjuncture, and hands him a petition for her brother who is out of work and asks the man of influence for a place. This brother had studied at the University and was the author of some tales and poems by which he sought to support himself and his sisters. Later he gave to the world a famous robber-story *Rinaldo Rinaldini*, the delight of boys, which was published about the same time that Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* came out, and far outstripped the work of his great brother-in-law in immediate saleability, if not in everlastingness. But the real petition which Phileros heard was that of love throbbing out of the prayerful words and looks of the mature young woman. Both sides were ready and in deep need of each other, so down comes the Love-God and fetters their hearts in his invisible chain so that neither can get away.

Such was our world-famous Christiane, a bright, plump little blonde, with winsome blue eyes and a round full face enwreathed in massive brown locks. A sketch of her by Goethe about 1789 has been found which shows her countenance peeping out rather roguishly from under her enveloping shock of loose hair. She was a work-girl, being compelled to earn her own living in a factory of artificial flowers; she bore an honest name, all later gossip to the contrary was doubtless the product of malice or envy. For she, with her little pin-hook, had caught the biggest fish in the Weimar social pool, where many fisher-women of the higher classes sat waiting for a nibble. Jealousy will not fail to sharpen that female poniard, the tongue, to its keenest point. And good reason they have, for they can claim to be defending their own hearth and its institution against the deepest violation of its sanctity.

Let the result be told: On the 13th of July, 1788, the distinguished poet, the high aristocratic official celebrates with the humble folk-girl what he calls his "marriage of conscience," being not yet four weeks at home from Italy. The day he afterwards observed as the anniversary of his "nuptials without ceremony," the nature of which he hints in a letter to his friend Schiller. But the affair

did not stop at this point. The girl had won his heart as well as stilled his sensuous appeal; her sunny looks and cheery ways had lit up his gloom, companioned his solitude; she had brought back to him Rome and radiant Italy. At once the poetry begins to flow in gleeful vein which transfuses old Rome into modern Weimar, classic measures into German speech, and especially Roman Faustina into Teutonic Christiane. Thus Phileros the lover now poetizes his soul's frisky iridescent fancies into ancient hexametral forms of the antique world, endowing them with a more rapturous life than they ever possessed in their native land. Goethe's *Roman Elegies* celebrate not only his "marriage of conscience," but chant the most internal poetic epithalamium of the ancient wedded to the modern spirit known in literature. That simple Teutonic maiden had the power of Teutonizing again the estranged classic Goethe, and of making him pour forth in native tones the wedlock not only of two persons, but of two worlds as it were in love's embrace. But, O Phileros, forget not the counterstroke of the law amid happiness forbidden.

Not long afterwards Goethe takes this bride of his conscience to his abode and installs her as the mistress of his home, where, on December 25, 1789, his first child, August Goethe,

was born, the earliest scion of the House of Tantalus, of fateful memory. The infant was baptized two days later by Herder, the court preacher, while the Duke of Weimar stood as god-father. Thus the anxious and probably foreboding parent sought to invoke for his unconstitutional offspring the favor of those two primal institutions, Church and State, whose laws he had deeply violated or rather defied by his deed. We learn that amid his great joy he felt overwhelmed with his great responsibility. Well he may, for has he not brought a human being unlawfully into a world ruled by law which judges and inflicts the penalty of man's infraction? Could he, as a poet visioning the regnant order of the universe, help asking: Will there be any re-quital of my deed upon me and mine in the upper Tribunal of Justice? What was he thinking about even at the baptismal font? We have already witnessed Goethe's power of forecast in his Hymn of the Fates as it preluded the destinies of the Tantalids in his *Iphigenia*.

Thus the act, starting apparently as a little escapade with a work-girl who met him in a public place, grew portentously by adding one violation to another till it became Goethe's most daring and persistent defiance of the ethical consciousness of society.

Strangely he drops back into his Titanic mood, and we may well deem it his culminating deed of Titanism, taking this to mean his open challenge of the institutional world. We have designated his Frankfort Epoch, the time of *Götz* and *Werther*, as the peculiar stage of his Titanic protest which he set down in writing; while the Weimar Decennium was emphatically his training out of his recalcitrant anti-social temper. Italy still further laid upon his character and poetry its spell of classic serenity and order. In fact he had fallen out with his former volcanic self, and disliked its expression in literary production which was still alive, for instance in Schiller's early plays. But now comes the strange relapse into a transcended state of his former self—a dozen years after his proper Titanism he does the most Titanic act of his whole life, yea of his time. He, the highest spokesman of Literature, the first official of the State, the greatest Genius of the age, suddenly assumes an attitude defiant of man's basic institution, and indeed of the total social fabric. For it is no sudden whiff of passionate indulgence, no hidden illicit relation, but publicly assumed and persisted in to the last, even if at first he tried to conceal it. He flung openly his action of demonic insolence into the face of Germany, of Europe, yea of all time on account

of the eternal greatness of the man, and there it stands today, a most important node of his life-poem, unfolding into tragic catastrophes doomful as those of the ancient Houses of Laius or Pelops. Already it has been said that he has re-enacted the deed of old Tantalus guilty of arrogance toward the Gods—a designation of himself doubtless sprung from his own lips.

It is true that many years afterward, in a moment of great external trial and anxiety, he seeks some adjustment to law and institution by formally marrying his Christiane and legitimating his son, then nearly seventeen years old, who was present at the ceremony. But the fatal deed had been done and its tragic fruits had been maturing with the march of time, whereof the record will be given hereafter. And that youth, an institutional outcast through the act of his father, what doom might he not hear even in the wedding-bells!

Phileros has now consummated the deed which lay inherent in his nature without the corrective of an institutional order, which is indeed above him, but which is really what secures him and his at last. The lover of Love, taken by himself, is fated, and Goethe simply pushed forward to the extreme realization of what was born in him. Again and

again he will get the counterstroke of his conduct, and will record it indirectly, and will through self-expression escape destiny. It is a curious fact that the poet has never directly dramatized or even recorded his life-tragedy, though fragments of it we can trace under numerous alien forms. But his life-poem cannot neglect this deepest strain of his total career. Here, too, it must be noted that Goethe always showed the power of parrying the mortal back-thrust of his own deed; the gift of his Genius was to utter his fate and thereby transcend it, and live on. The deadly Parcae often gripped him and made him suffer terribly, but could not hold him in their clutch of death, till the whole cycle of his existence had rounded itself out to its last completeness in his eighty-third year. But all the rest of his Family were not Fate-compellers like him, they could not expiate through a divine gift the curse lowering upon their House; they perished tragically as Tantalids, even if they were the children of the self-redeeming Tantalus.

Soon Goethe began to feel the social penalty of his conduct. All Weimar was roused to indignant gossip which encircled its most famous man wherever he went. Especially the women, the natural guardians of the family's honor, were in a state of frenzied revolt,

and hissed with tongues of venom, like a nest of rattlesnakes, especially at poor Christiane, more the victim than the victimizer. Her boy, even in his baby-carriage, became a center of buzzing, malicious whispers which wafted to him his irregular birth. What a fatal atmosphere for the innocent child to grow up in, where everybody would know and tattle his blotted history! Still, underneath all the malice and jealousy of evil hearts, we may see the violated institution using its weapons of defense and punishment. It was the maddened cry of the true instituted Family in a furious battle against its destroyer now represented in the negative Family of Goethe. Let the scandal-monger do her worst. She is now scandalizing scandal itself, and burning up Hell in its own brimstone. So, according to the old legend, the Devil is just the one whose function is to punish deviltry.

Of all these female tongues, that of Frau Von Stein was the most sibilant and poisonous, and with no little reason. She, the aristocratic, highly cultured lady, had been supplanted in the heart of her poetic lover by an ordinary folk-girl without rank or education. Goethe, well knowing her power of sting in speech, and sympathizing with her situation, and probably feeling a prick of remorse, sought to console her and to retain still some

hold in her affection, even if she, now a wilted rose of more than forty, was to play second to his young blooming odalisk. Not a bit of it; she took sick in her distress, wrote him a letter of final separation, and hurried off to a watering-place for recovery. When she returns, she becomes the rancorous censor of all Goethe's shortcomings, and they were certainly a fertile theme. She writes a little drama with the title of *Dido*, filling Vergil's picture of the forsaken woman with her own woe and bitterness. In venomous scorn she satirizes even his bodily shape with its fresh corpulency, and sneers at his utter degradation of spirit, making him say, "I count myself now among the worms, and find my greatest pleasure in living with vermin"—a hit at humble Christiane. She goes so far as to call him a Faun "with horned head and hoofed feet, to whom no vow is holy." Thus she fills all Weimar with her vengeful outcries, and coins stinging epithets for every unbridled tongue of the town, while she, like ancient Cassandra of Troy, utters frantic prophecies of evil for this newest House of Tantalus. And her uncanny bodements of coming ill were based upon the terrible fact, and in one way or other marched toward fulfilment. While August Goethe was still a mere boy, she gave a startling outlook upon his fate.

Truly in Goethe's life-poem she enacts the part of a maddened sybil who mirrors in frenzied forecast the consequences of his deed.

Thus Phileros, loving his Love without the restraint and the oversight of law and institution, has done the culminating act of his career, having carried out to its ultimate result what we have already seen to be the innermost elemental power of his nature. Herewith, we repeat, his real tragedy of life opens, a very long but unwritten drama of retribution, suffering, and fatality which involves not only himself but his entire begotten family to its last member. Of course Anti-Phileros has seized upon this act with gloating avidity and preached many a sermon of sulphurous damnation against our sinning Phileros. Only too true, we have often to cry out; still such is not our way. We shall not bemoralize the in itself dooming deed with unctuous reflections, but let it work itself out in its own time and manner that it may show what it really is—the doer's life-tragedy which tells on itself in its long line of tragic consequences. Thus the poet enacts a work of art in his life, which becomes an essential constituent of his total life-poem. We cannot well puritanize Goethe, he will not fit into such a world-view. We have already seen him

anguishing, confessing, and punishing himself in his vicarious literary Purgatory, and there winning atonement, or at least relief. In his writ at its best he makes himself a world-judge over his deed and metes the penalty to his vice-gerent characters, and thus saves himself. So we shall let Goethe *ethicize* himself (in the right sense of the term), beholding him summon himself before the objective institutional tribunal of the ages, and there passing judgment upon himself for his transgression. That is a very different thing from moralizing him according to some subjective standard or possibly prejudice of our own.

The deeply suggestive fact has already been noticed that Goethe had a lurking premonition of this deed and its consequences before it took place. He, as Phileros, could hardly help feeling far down in his underself the possibility of his present action. One thinks that he must have been haunted by that Fate-forecasting Hymn of the Fates, a prophetic song of himself welling up from the last depths of his Genius, which doomfully forewarns him against committing the grand deed of insolence against the Gods who whelm the violator into gloomy Tartarean abysses. To be sure all this is told mythically, throwing a far-away uncanny shadow

upon things to be.' As he looked upon his new-born babe, could he not hear the awful reverberation of his own words from within:

His children's doom he ponders
And bows down his head.

Nearly two generations later, and long after the death of Goethe, his grandson writes in a letter: *Das Reich der Eumeniden geht zu Ende* (Engel's *Goethe*, p. 581). The rule (or realm) of the Furies is drawing to a close, having gripped its last victim in that grandson who tells his own doom. Thus ends the House of Tantalus, or the life-tragedy of Goethe, still working in its sole survivor.

But let us turn back to the more agreeable and more immediate result of this problematical match. Christiane brought cheer and company to the downcast and isolated Goethe, she filled in part and for a time the social chasm made by his Italian Journey. She looked after his household, she attended to his little wants, she made a home for the homeless man, something which he had never fully enjoyed before, not even in the house of his parents at Frankfort. There is abundant evidence that Christiane was a genuine German home-maker, and thus laid a solid foundation for Goethe's attachment, even if in later years she degenerated. Senses and

heart she could gratify, but she could not respond to the highest part of his being, namely the poetic and intellectual. For this he had to go elsewhere. Still some of his best lyric poetry was written in her honor, indicating how closely she was tied to his passion and his heart. A true marriage of the higher order has three capital links uniting the pair: the sensuous, the emotional and the spiritual, the latter being more the eternal element which indeed eternizes the other two with its ageless dower. Christiane could in no adequate manner supply this uppermost link; the result was as she grew old, the bond grew old and both fell apart though in different ways; they were not everlastingly wedlocked in the triple link of passion, heart, and spirit.

As Goethe has often declared that life is symbolical, and especially that his own was such, we inquire what did his marriage with Christiane represent? She, the simple Teutonic folk-girl was joined to the classic Olympian Goethe, or at least when he was in his most intense classic mood. Will he indicate any such union in the deepest layer of his being, in his poetic Genius? Will he strive to marry Italy with Teutonia in his art, symbolical of what he had done in his life? Much later in the *Second Part of Faust* he brings together German Faust and Greek Helen in love

and marriage, a conscious symbol of the conjunction and interfusion of the classic and northern spirits. But now the Hellenic form-world of which he has become the actual embodiment, is personally wedded to and living with the Teutonic sense-world. As he must always experience what he writes, let us see how he poetizes this ultimate fact of his present life.

III.

Goethe's Classic Measures in German.

The most unique poetic achievement of Goethe during the present Epoch, which is the first after his return from Italy, lies in the fact that he now makes classic measures talk German, and thus widens the horizon of all Teutonic versification, not excepting English, which might herein take a weighty lesson from him, even if it has failed to do so as yet. The ancient meter which he chiefly employed at this time was the hexameter of which he uses two forms: the pure and the elegiac. The pure hexameter has six regular beats, each of which may be followed by one or two unaccented syllables. Let it here be noted that Goethe does not try to quantify his measures, like the ancient poets, but proceeds by accent in accord with the nature of Teutonic lan-

guages. Still the effect is hexametral, having a classic echo even in our modern speech. Such is indeed its greatest charm when skillfully constructed. Thus in the meter, the outer garb, we find an intermarriage of the old and new, of the Classic and Teutonic.

The second kind of hexameter used by Goethe at this time is the elegiac, which takes one pure and one abbreviated hexameter and puts them into a distich. Both lines have the six beats of the hexameter, but the second line rejects the unaccented syllables at the end and in the middle, hence it is often called a pentameter. This elegiac measure is the one that Goethe employs in his *Roman Elegies*, already alluded to, which celebrate the full sensuous glow of his union with Christiane. And here we may note the underlying symbolism of this group of poems. They start when the deeply classicized Goethe meets, within a few weeks after his return from Italy, the German maiden Christiane, and forms with her his tender alliance. Thus in the two persons there is a marriage of two worlds, the antique and the modern, more or less unconscious on the part of both. Undoubtedly such a union is an impulse, an immediate irresistible passion, each needs and must have the other at once.

I. But we have to mark something more

than this merely personal side in the poetry. There gleams out of the raptured verse a deeper suggestion, an universal purport which makes it a significant document in Goethe's evolution; and it may be said to have its little niche in the World's Literature. The hexametral measure chanting its German words, already suggests the marriage of the classic and the modern, which the content of the poems in many an exquisite image celebrates, even if the moral sense at times gets a shock, as it does in Shakespeare. They run double—we behold Rome and Weimar, Faustina and Christiane, the Italian and the German lover. The environment, incidents, meter are Southern; the speech, the soul, the genius are Northern; yet they are intergrown indissolubly—two experiences of love are here indeed, yet fused by the fire of art into one exalted outpour of the passion to which "my life and my poesy have been dedicated." We may think that Goethe ought to marry Christiane if he is to fulfil his call of uniting Classic and German art in his country's literature. He claims he did. At any rate he has first to live what he writes, he must enact in his own immediate experience whatever of worth he sets down in his verse. So we may construe the poet in this enigmatic episode: by the spontaneous unconscious ne-

cessity of his own being he takes to his bosom and to his soul a naive, unsophisticated folk-girl, who represents in all its primal simplicity her people's native strain. Already he has loved an artless rural maid in Frederika, who also taps for him at Strassburg a little rill of the original Teutonic spirit which he sets to song. But that was an easy return to his own; he then had never been in Italy and undergone his supreme estrangement from his native land, to whose hearth Christiane brings him back, giving him home and family.

The *Roman Elegies*, on account of their outspoken classic freedoms were long withheld from publication, which the poet's two chief friends, Herder and the Duke, opposed, evidently thinking that they ought never to see the light. But Goethe knew well their pivotal place not only in his own evolution, but also in general literature. At last in 1795, after some six or seven years' delay, they were printed in Schiller's new periodical (*Die Horen*) with the omission of a few numbers. Their old Roman prototypes may be found in the Latin "triumvirs of love," Catullus (or Ovid), Tibullus, and especially Propertius, whom Goethe himself has pointed out as an ancient influence. But in the deepest matter the modern poet was more original

than his originals, and of course his *Roman Elegies* have a significance far more universal than those of the old Roman poets.

II. In this revival and transfusion of classic forms Goethe also tried his poetic hand at the ancient epigram, which enterprise of his may be best seen in the group which he calls *Venetian Epigrams*, since the general setting of them is Venice, in which Italian city he stayed some months in 1790. Their content as well as their length varies a good deal; some of them, the best and most affirmative ones, are short Elegies and treat of his love for Christiane from whom he is now separated. This separation makes him bitter, and deeply negative toward quite all that he sees, hence the querulous ill-natured tone in many of these epigrams; he becomes the furious critic and tears his former fair Italy to very tatters, as if she were not ragged enough already. Such critical use of the epigram he will later develop in his short arrowy *Xenia* which, venom-laden he will shoot against his literary foes in Germany. The most striking psychical fact about the Venetian Epigrams is his strong reaction against Italy; he marks his surprise at himself when after some acrid outbursts he cries out: "And this is the Italy which I quit with so much pain" only a short time ago. What is the matter?

The magnet which draws him is no longer Southern but Northern, he does not look wistfully toward Rome but toward Weimar. In the *Roman Elegies* there was no such separation, Phileros was in the immediate enjoyment of love's presence; now he is tortured by love's absence. Thus the Venetian Epigrams form a sort of counterpart to the preceding Elegies. Doubtless the pendulum of itself had to swing backward from the exhilaration of the Italian Journey. Still we have here a test that the German folk-maiden had become intimately ingrown with his heart.

This antique epigrammatic form will be employed a good deal by the poet hereafter for a variety of purposes. He transforms it into a very subtle and pliable instrument to express his many varying moods—prophetic, enigmatic, satirical, descriptive. Already before he went to Italy he had tested himself in it, chiefly through the example and influence of Herder who had made numerous translations of Greek epigrams. But the strange fact is that the epigrammatic mood seems not to have taken hold of Goethe during his Italian rambles, in which it would be most natural. For the epigram meant originally an inscription, which would spontaneously bubble up from a poetic soul at view of almost any passing object—statue, landscape, per-

son, event. The Greek Anthology has preserved a few thousands out of innumerable examples, indicating how even the ordinary Greek consciousness was poetic, and would throw out an iridescent jet of itself under small provocation. Doubtless all Hellas and all Italy were strown everywhere with such epigrams—brief pointed inscriptions telling the essence of the thing or of the occasion at hand. The traveler of today in classic lands, probing down into that wonderful underlying substrate of poetry in those old peoples, will seek to lift the buried treasure himself, and will become epigrammatic in sympathetic creation, building some epigrams responsively in his own tongue after the classic model.

Though Goethe did not epigrammatize himself during his classical trip, as it appears by the record, he developed much activity in this sphere after his return home, as we shall have occasion to note. This cluster of Venetian Epigrams is the first evidence of his decided epigrammatic bent, which spouts little classic effusions of poetry along his path pretty much at random. He now employs for their metrical form the elegiac hexameter, derived from Greek antiquity and reproduced often in Roman poets. Herein he classizes himself again, but later he will drop this classic form and fall back upon his native Teu-

tonic verse in his so-called *Tame Xenia*. But that stage lies far ahead of us; now he has turned elegiac epigrammatist, in deep accord with his present stage of poetic evolution.

It should be added that Goethe employs the Greek mythology in these hexametral poems, but after his own fashion. From Jupiter down to the Faun he sports with the old divinities, invoking them in playful prayer, yet with an undercurrent of undivine meaning. He is not herein seriously mythical but para-mythical, using the Gods not in true faith but with a second intention. Sometimes he makes a deity for his own convenience, out of some thought or abstraction, in right old-Roman fashion, as when he deifies Opportunity in one of his Roman Elegies. He also calls to his aid the lesser Gods of the ancient Pantheon, such as Nymphs, Dryads, Fauns, and especially little blind Amor, the very deity of Phileros, the lover of Love.

IV.

The Classical Reynard the Fox.

The most daring literary feat of the solitary Goethe in his castle of defiance was to transform the Low-German folk-poem *Reynard the Fox*, from its humble and even

despised doggerel into the exalted, heroic hexameter, perhaps the most dignified of verse, at least in our mental association. But now comes a kind of inverted epic of man turned animal, having its hero Achilles and even its king Agamemnon among the beasts of forest and field, who can tongue the lofty hexametral roll in the epical measures of the Gods. Thus a secret world-irony may be felt even in its metrical beat, very characteristic of the present temper of the world-tabooed poet himself.

But the living shape which will rise up and fit mid all this classic exuberance is none other than humble Teutonic Christiane now wedded "in conscience" to Olympian Goethe, who is thus enacting in his life what he is putting into his poem, which here celebrates the happy union and marriage of the Classic form with the Teutonic soul in one long nuptial narrative, even if there be many satirical flings against the waspish world. So it comes that Goethe in his *Reynard the Fox* is writing a phase of his own pivotal experience.

This work, therefore, represents a unique stage of his present solitary Epoch which is bent on classizing all Teutonia along with himself. So he takes the most native elemental product of the Teutonic folk, and

whelms it into his classical melting-pot, bringing forth a distinctive work of his Genius. *Reynard the Fox* originally sprang out of a vast protoplasmic reservoir of popular fable which showed the animal world playing the part of men in the various relations of life. This fable had especially evolved in Germany and belonged peculiarly to her people, starting far back in the primeval forest and unfolding through the medieval into the modern era. Like every true Mythus it had thrown off many varying forms and had shown itself as so much plastic material for the poets who handled it. Moreover it grew differently among different peoples and tribes to which it was transplanted, reflecting their spirit after its fashion; one French redaction of it is said to have reached a total of 50,000 lines, another 30,000; but its favorite and lasting home was doubtless Northern Germany whose dialect and consciousness it best expressed.

Such was the vast mythic material of the people which Goethe tapped by his *Reynard the Fox*, giving to it a new speech and a new form, and transfiguring it into a permanent work of literature. Doubtless the story was known to his boyhood, since Frankfort had been a chief center of its early publication and distribution, and his myth-loving mother must have kept it in her big reservoir of ever-

flowing storydom. But it lay dormant till he was ready. He says that the horrors of the French Revolution, in which men had relapsed into beasts, provoked him to take up Reynard which came into his hands "through a special providence," being just the utterance of the time and of himself. "I took it with me to the blockade of Mainz, and found consolation and joy in my labor devoted to this unholy world-bible." He began the work early in 1793, and ended it in May of the same year, though he doctored this first spontaneous outburst a good deal before it was published.

But the chief interest for us is that he turned this Teutonic folk-poem with its original Low-German doggerel into lofty classic hexameters, using as a medium Gottsched's High-German prose translation (1752). What does such a fact mean? That he could handle the doggerel with supreme success he had already shown in his *Faust*, which is written in that measure. Indeed the doggerel, short rhymed Iambic lines of four feet mainly, is the most natural, easy, and popular measure in all Teutonic literature, and is found in a larger body of poetry than any other metrical form. In medieval German verse down to Hans Sachs it prevails, and reaches its last supremacy in Goethe's greatest poetical

achievement—*Faust*. In English also the doggerel has been much employed; we find it in the old metrical romances; early Chaucer uses it as well as recent Sir Walter Scott; the best specimen in our American poetry is Whittier's *Snow-bound*. We may deem it the native measure of Teutonic people, the most nearly universal among them, even if it has a certain taint in its very name.

Now Goethe in his present classical bent is going to classicize this original Teutonic folk-poem, changing its inborn metrical vesture into an imported hexametral garb. It is again that marriage which he is celebrating both in his life and in his works between the Antique and the German. It was an audacious enterprise. Has he succeeded? We think he has, though not a few have said and still say that there is no true reconciliation between the form and content of his poetic performance. But Goethe's *Reynard the Fox* is read today as a product of universal literature, having been transmuted by the poet's genius from its quite formless mythical protoplasm into a work of art. Undoubtedly both the native fable and the foreign hexameter are changed in spirit a good deal; still they are wedded and are happy together. Much fault has been found with the hexameters by formal metrists like Voss; but they

live and march gaily to their new tune. Undoubtedly they are not Homeric or Vergilian, and are not intended to be.

The new fresh atmosphere which is suffused through the whole poem is its peculiar humor, quite different from that of the Low-German original, which was naive and hearty, but coarse and often cruel—the animals were too much animalized for human enjoyment. Goethe has refined all this without losing the flavor; he has humanized the crude bestiality and given it a courtly polish. But the chief ingredient which he has added is wholly novel, as it belongs neither to the original poem nor to the verse in itself. This peculiar quality is the humorous sensation which arises when the animal population here is heard speaking in lofty heroic hexameters, and celebrating their petty bestial exploits. The roll of the verse has of itself a dash of humor which the old doggerel could not possess. The antique measure applied to such a theme turns mock-heroic in its very sound; many a verse has its own fun just in the intonation; the happy incongruity between word and thing keeps the smiles rippling. The old Greek also had his mock-heroic literature, in which the heroic Homeric hexameter was decidedly unheroized, witness the old skit called *The Battle of the Frogs and Mice*, which also human-

izes the petty animals. But that was hardly more than a travesty of the one poetic world-view, the ancient Homeric; while Goethe's poem conjoins two cultures, putting the one into the other's vesture, in a mood of pervasive ironical humor. It may be added that *Don Quixote* produces a somewhat similar impression of heroic mockery. So we have to think that Goethe lived this mock-heroic measure, and felt it as he wrote it singing from his deed.

Thus we stress metrical form not only in Goethe's verse but also in his life, so deeply intergrown were they in his Genius. For variety of metrical power he probably stands unique among all the poets of the world. Every reader who seeks in some degree to catch the total sweep of his literary personality, will be drawn to grapple with the problem of his varying meters, which are so manifold and so subtly adapted to their themes. His greatest poem, *Faust*, contains many, though by no means all, of his measures. One of the puzzles of that work to the inquisitive student is the frequent shifting of metrical schemes. Why such a diversified interplay of rhymes, feet and lines in the Easter scene (*Faust*, Part I)? And the question we ask here concerning one little scene of one of his poems, we may well ask in regard to the

whole multiform output of his poetical life.

In general we can divide the measures of Goethe into two great divisions, ancient and modern. His greatest works, both dramatic and lyric, move in modern or Teutonic rhythms, as his most natural spontaneous utterance. Still there is a body of excellent poetry which follows the ancient or Greek cadence. Indeed it may be said that Goethe was altogether the greatest master of Greek meters in a modern tongue that Europe has produced. He heard the voice of the old Parnassian Muse and made it sing in German.

These ancient Greek measures he started to use already at Frankfort, and continued to employ them at Weimar. In this earlier tendency Pindar seems largely his inspiration. The free flight of irregular and rhymeless lines unhampered by exact measurement of foot and verse was congenial to his bound-bursting tendency at that time. His measure has in its form a Titanic reflection, like the choruses of Aeschylus. At the present time (1915) there is a tendency especially in the younger poets to return to these free rhymeless rhythms, which Goethe employed in one of the stages of his poetic evolution,

Hintful is the fact that during his Weimar Epoch we find him passing from his unmeas-

ured to his measured schemes of verse. The hexameter starts to appear rather tentatively in brief scattered examples chiefly in its elegiac form. He had begun to look into the Greek Anthology, still not fully appreciated today as the vast depository of elemental poetry of the Hellenic race. Hence he commences to throw down some Epigrams in the old classic sense, that is, inscriptions on persons, actions, events, giving in a few lines their ideal poetic essence:

Goethe's contribution in the matter of classic form has come to stay, though its validity in modern literature has often been questioned. According to our judgment he is in this field a forerunner whose work is still to be fully appropriated and unfolded in the future. Hence we have sought to set forth its significant place in his total achievement. But during the present Epoch he wrote much in prose which drops below the level of his genius and which we shall have to leave unmentioned. Narratives, novelettes, even dramas satirizing the French Revolution, make the sandy tract of his Genius which we hurry through with a swift side-glance just to glimpse the Sahara of his life-poem. Still these products have their significance as showing the sunken Goethe during his solitary Epoch, unlaureled of Fame and for-

saken by his Muse. Is his Genius departed forever? He thought so himself at times, and said so. But in this condition his deeply estranged, if not yet quite lost soul is met by Frederick Schiller, like that other poet who comes to Dante "astray in a dark wood" and is to lead him through and out of his Inferno. The isolated Genius is now associated by a kindred sympathetic Genius, associated creatively, whereby each is brought to the full flowering of his highest creativity. Thus we come to a new Epoch which unfolds the supreme inflorescence of Goethe's life-poem.

CHAPTER FIFTH.

GOETHE'S ASSOCIATION WITH SCHILLER.

From the solitary Goethe we now pass to the associated Goethe—a transition which, though long prepared, took place with some degree of rapidity. We have just seen how the poet, after his return from Italy became spiritually isolated without and within, alienated from his environing world and from himself. The result was he had about resolved to give up poetry, and thus to renounce his very Genius, as he says. He, now at the ripest middle-age, the most creative time of life, had come to feel old and outworn, quite transcended by other younger talents. Thus he was in the act of laying himself upon the shelf when he met Schiller, not for the first time, but at the pivotal moment for both. Then followed his new youth, his “second puberty” he names it, which he believed to be a distinguishing mark of great men generally, and which recurred in his own career not merely once but several times, as we shall hereafter see. He possessed the power of being re-born, yea of re-bearing himself

spiritually into a fresh creative juvenescence after a time of lapsed energy and senility. Thus he passed through old-age several times, and also through youth quite as often.

It was indeed an Epoch-making transition. Schiller observes the fact in a letter to his friend (1797): "You are now going back to your youth, fully developed and mature, and you will unite the fruit with the flower." Then he idealizes the occurrence as was his wont: "This second youth is the youth of the Gods, and immortal as theirs." A year later Goethe writes to Schiller in their Correspondence: "You have brought me a second youth, and made me a poet again, which I had quite ceased to be." Certainly a grand reconciliation with his own true destiny, from which he had been estranged—how did Schiller bring it about? Through his unique friendship which meant something far more than the relation of individual to individual, since Schiller restored Goethe's lost Genius to its right vocation, stimulated it to renewed activity, and associated the lonely poet afresh with himself and his world. This rescue Goethe was in the habit of acknowledging till his last day, as in his confession to Councillor Schultz: "I really do not know what would have become of me without Schiller's incitement." Then he goes on to say that this sec-

ond renascent of his Genius would not have been unless the right mediator had appeared at the right instant.

I. Goethe in his later years was fond of recalling his time with Schiller, as we see by his many allusions in his talks with Eckermann and others. He designates it as "an Epoch which will not return and still is working at the present day, exerting a vital and powerful influence not on Germany alone." Observe that Goethe in this as well as in other passages calls his friendship with Schiller an Epoch, in which designation we shall follow him, as most writers on both poets have done. The Goethe-Schiller alliance is something distinctive, not only in the poet's life, but in literature. We may add for the purpose of avoiding confusion, that it does not embrace a Period which Goethe calls a leading Epoch (*Hauptepoche*). For instance the Journey to Italy opened a Period in the total sweep of Goethe's career; and during the present Epoch Goethe still maintained the classical bent which he received from Italy. Hence the Goethe-Schiller time is properly to be regarded as an Epoch of the poet's second or classical Period, of which it undoubtedly is the longest and most prolific part.

Such, then, is the Epoch now under consid-

eration. It lasted about ten years, or perchance a little more, from Goethe's first pivotal interview with Schiller in late May, 1794, till Schiller's decease, after some months of serious illness on May 9, 1805. Perhaps the best way to date their mutual activity is to start with the first letter of Schiller in the Goethe-Schiller Correspondence, June 13, 1794, and compare it with his last letter, written on his death-bed at the end of April, 1805. This indicates some ten full years of continuously active intercourse between the two poets, and so the whole time may be distinctively entitled the Goethe-Schiller Decennium.

It should also be noted that this Epoch is the middle one of Goethe's total life, being the fifth Epoch out of the nine into which the complete round of his creative activity falls. Thus it is the culmination of the poet's temporal existence, lasting from his forty-fifth till his fifty-fifth year—on the whole the choicest of man's allotted days for best productive authorship. There can be no question that Goethe brought forth his greatest and most lasting works during this Epoch, beginning with *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* and ending with *The First Part of Faust*. Undoubtedly he had already written famous things, and hereafter his cunning will not fail him even in his old age; still the present

Decennium is the cap-stone of his life's great arch of more than eight decades.

Thus it comes that Goethe's life gives a sense of fullness and of completeness surpassing that of any other recorded individual, with its total human gamut of good and bad, of fulfilment and failure, of the positive and the negative man. Far narrower and more incomplete, even if more ideal and exemplary was the poet Schiller's career. In the first place he was cut off at the age of forty-five while in the full process of development; compared to Goethe he had hardly finished one Period of his earthly activity, though he had passed through several stages or Epochs, concluding with the most brilliant and the most creative one in conjunction with Goethe. In the next place he was limited on many sides by persistent ill-health, by lack of education and of travel, by downright poverty. Thus he was straitened to the life particular while Goethe kept expanding toward the life universal.

II. The growth of the friendship of the two poets has its history and passed through a stage of mutual repugnance if not of downright hate. Schiller speaking of him in a letter declares: "This man, this Goethe just stands in my way. He reminds me so often that Fate has treated me harshly. How eas-

ily was his Genius borne forward by his lot, and how have I had to struggle up to this minute!" Thus Schiller cannot forbear a touch of jealousy when he compares their conditions. More poignant is this sentence: "He has awakened in me a strange mixture of love and hate, a feeling not dissimilar to that which Brutus and Cassius must have borne toward Caesar." Here Schiller confesses that it is Goethe's towering greatness, as in the case of Caesar, which makes him feel little and envious. So true is it that whomsoever or whatsoever the World-Spirit indwells, be it individual or nation, is certain to be hated by those who know themselves beneath such transcendent power. Hence he acknowledges his inferiority: "With Goethe I dare not measure myself when he puts forth his whole strength. He has far more Genius than I have, and then too a far greater wealth of knowledge, a more certain sensuous grip, and an artistic insight clarified and refined by information of every kind." Still Schiller's deepest longing is to come into communion with the Great Man somehow, and really to get hold of him. "Goethe is seldom alone," he complains, "and I would like, not merely to behold him at a distance, but to snatch out of him something for myself."

Such was the situation for several years

before 1794, during which Schiller was often in Weimar and its neighborhood, and saw Goethe in society and even spoke with him, but always "at a distance." Moreover they had mutual friends who sought to bring them together, but with no result. Schiller was even appointed professor at the University of Jena through Goethe's recommendation, but the interval of icy politeness remained impassable. Schiller again hits the nail on the head in a letter: "Goethe makes his existence beneficent, but only as a God, without giving himself." A very striking designation of the Olympian Goethe: divine indeed, as is Zeus, but he will not give himself—*movens non motus*—like the Greek God, statuesque in his loftiness, but cold as the marble. Such is truly the solitary Goethe, whose very soul has been sculptured in his classic workshop, but he has begun to feel the limit of such training; the drawback of such isolation. Moreover the man has appeared, is indeed just here, who is battering away at his self-walled fortress, and will soon break it down, letting the prisoner out into the world and into his true self.

Still not yet could be the consummation. Schiller had written offensive words in public print which were secretly aimed at Goethe who was well aware of the fact. The

writer had disparaged his Genius "as a mere product of Nature" which he could not help if he would. Goethe was too Godlike for revenge, yet too Godlike to condescend to forgive. Long afterwards in a retrospect he hints the wound: "No companionship could be thought of; all intercession of friends proved fruitless; my reasons could not be refuted. We were antipodal, the Earth's diameter lay between us, thus we were completely polarized, and could not be drawn together." Still as poles they are on the way to find themselves necessarily interrelated and inseparably conjoined together. Schiller also will cry out in despair: "Goethe never overflows toward any human being, he always keeps himself in reserve; you cannot get hold of him anywhere, I believe him to be a consummate Egoist." So the see-saw kept up for several years between the two poets, each needing the other, each far down in his heart longing for the other. Schiller in his better moments forefelt the coming bond, which would be all the stronger for its long and tense trial, and he could prophetically hint, "if one tries his best, he cannot remain unrecognized by the other forever."

III. At last the psychological moment arrived, and the two souls feeling their diversity but also their deep unity, began slowly to

clasp and to become ingrown not only for life but for all time. Goethe, looking back at this determining node of his career in later life, has told of it with some degree of fullness. Both were at a lecture in Jena on Natural Science, and happened to go out the door together, when they began conversing on what they had just heard. Both agreed that the treatment of the subject was faulty on account of its piecemeal method of exposition. Whereat Goethe took fire and declared that there was another way of unfolding Nature different from this separated, analytic manner. They reached Schiller's house, Goethe stepped over the sill—a big step for him to take. Thus he narrates: "the conversation enticed me inside where I set forth my metamorphosis of plants with energy, and by means of strokes of the pen I caused a symbolic plant to grow up before his eyes. Schiller understood the matter well, but shook his head saying: 'That is no experience; that is an idea.' I was taken aback, somewhat vexed; the old point of difference had appeared, and with it a streak of the old dislike; but I drew myself together and replied: 'That is a new delight for me that I have ideas without knowing it, and even see them with my own eyes.' Then arose a lively discussion between me, the obstinate realist, and

Schiller, the trained Kantian, but neither side would give up." So Goethe reports, but in the deeper sense he had given up. Hence he adds that "the first step had been taken," especially by him, for Schiller did not need to take it. Goethe felt that he had now met the man who dared meet him face to face, who could break down his isolation and mediate him afresh with his own true selfhood, with his very Genius. Accordingly he here confesses that "Schiller's power of attraction was great, he bound fast to himself all who might approach him"—and that was what now happened; "I took part in his plans, I promised to contribute to his periodical (*Die Horen*); and his wife whom I had known and was fond of from childhood, helped to cement the bond which became lasting."

Still the difference remained and persisted through all their long and intense friendship: Schiller the idealist, Goethe the realist; the one essentially subjective, the other essentially objective; the former more the woman, who loves the man, the latter more the man who loves the woman, even if both of them were masculine. But that "symbolic plant" (so called here by Goethe) was verily characteristic. Schiller sees it not with the outer eyesight, but with the inner vision as idea, hence his idealism; Goethe sees it, or claims

to see it, with his own eyes, visible there before him, hence his obstinate realism. That is, he visions immediately the plant as universal, from which all particular plants are generated, and he can actually draw the same with his pen. Such is indeed his poetic act: his symbolic or universal plant he beholds or re-creates as particular; he cannot grasp it as thought or idea, he must make it a real individual. Thus we also catch a glimpse of his limit: he is the born poet who has to learn philosophy if he gets it; while Schiller is rather the born philosopher who has to learn poetry, and this is just what he will do with a marvelous result.

There is no doubt that through this conversation Goethe has come to feel the limitation of his purely poetic consciousness which he must transcend if he would rise to be in himself the universal man and therewith the poet of all culture. Hence he at once begins with Schiller a profound abstract study of his art and of the fine arts generally; his persistent probing and searching into the philosophy of Aesthetics we can trace in their Correspondence which now rays forth in eager and earnest amplitude. Undoubtedly Goethe had deeply contemplated poetry and art before this time, especially in Italy; but now he philosophizes his work and even his Genius,

seeking to get consciously to the bottom of his own procedure with the very suggestive help of his friend. Indeed that is largely what Schiller has at present to do: show Goethe to himself, tell him what he is, for he hardly knows himself. He must rise from the poet more or less unconscious to the conscious poet. To be sure Goethe will often take a growl at this labor, which is not native to him, though he has to do it; he will complain that he has "no philosophical organ," and indeed philosophy is not organic with him; he will make mouths at "empty speculation," but he has to swallow the pill if he is going to get well and be the whole man. So he will speculate with Schiller, often very profoundly and to our mind poetically, for not a few of his letters are poems, having the Goethean poetic vision and aroma.

Then we are not to forget that just the present Goethe-Schiller Epoch was peculiarly an era of philosophy, for this was the time's very discipline in matters spiritual, and the center of it was the University of Jena which was under Goethe's personal administration. Fichte, Schelling and Hegel had all been there as professors; the brothers Schlegel and other leaders of the Romantic movement gathered about Jena as their chief point of radiation; Natural Science, Goethe's

own darling, had there creative workers. But the grand sunburst of that University was philosophical, the counterpart in the inner world of what the French Revolution, going on at the same time, was in the outer world. Now Goethe, the child of his age, had to know something of its chief discipline, if he would live spiritually in his own time; still further he had to philosophize himself and his self's very art, if he would swim abreast of his century. All this he must have felt, and must have been waiting for the moment and the man to mediate him with his present deepest need; behold, he comes, here they are, both of them, and the poet embraces at once "his dear Goddess Opportunity," at first with a smart scowl at his necessary medicine.

IV. Thus the bond of association was formed, and Schiller was ready to say afterward that it could not have taken place profitably at an earlier time—fortune had thwarted his efforts till the right conjunction of the stars. Goethe in talking with Eckermann (March 24, 1829) has stated his view of the tie with Schiller in his peculiar terms: "The higher a man stands, the more he is under the influence of the demons, and he must be always on the look-out" that he hit the favorable moment. For instance "there was something demonic in my getting acquainted

with Schiller. We might have met earlier or later, but the all-important fact is that we were brought together just at the Epoch when I had the Italian Journey behind me and Schiller was getting tired of his philosophical speculations.” So Goethe again marks off his Epoch with Schiller as well as the Epoch which went before it. Elsewhere such a meeting was called “a divine coincidence,” perchance like the intervention of one of Homer’s Gods coming down from above. Supernally ordered by a demonic power it was, else it could not have been Epoch-making; so the poet poetizes the grand node of his career.

Now what is the point at which their unity begins and from which it unfolds? Strangely it was philosophy or the much-decried speculation; Goethe needed more abstraction which Schiller could give, and Schiller needed a good dose of sensuous concreteness which Goethe could administer. Says Schiller: “We first found ourselves in unexpected agreement on the theory of art, which was the more interesting as it proceeded from opposite viewpoints.” Thus they discovered their theoretical harmony to start with. Goethe likewise writes to his friend: “You know, my dear sir, that after our fortnight’s conference we were united in principles,” from

which began to flow other co-incidences and concordances. In a letter, Schiller very frankly gives to his great pupil a pivotal lesson in psychology: “You have one labor more: as you have already passed from intuition (sensuous) to abstraction, so you must now reverse the process and turn your abstract concepts back into intuitions, and your thoughts into feelings, for only by means of these can your poetic genius be productive.” Thus through Schiller and his philosophy Goethe is to rise from the unconscious to the conscious artist, of course without jeopardizing his masterful spontaneity. But how about Goethe's classical bent in a Northern world? What is to be done with such a double-natured poet? Hereupon also Schiller imparts his word of instruction which has its significance for the future: “As you are a born German and as your Greek spirit was cast into this Northern world, there remains no other choice for you than either to become wholly a Northern artist or to supplement your imagination with that which is lacking to it by the power of thought, and to reproduce a Hellas as it were from within outwards by way of reflection.” Schiller foresees Goethe's tendency “to reproduce a Hellas in Germany,” which is the result of the Italian experience, and intimates that it must

be done "by the power of thought" rather than by the simple spontaneous outburst of his native talent, such as was the case with his earlier productions of the Frankfort Epoch. That first immediacy of his poetry has passed away, and his divine gift must now be restored and supported by a conscious knowledge of his art.

V. In this statement is indicated that double strand in Goethe which will run through the entire present Epoch, namely his Classic and his Northern creations, or his Greek and his German tendencies. Upon these two lines quite parallel his poetic activity will unfold, and throw off splendid examples of each kind. And not only he will proceed thus, he will impart the same doubleness to Schiller who will also write in classic forms though he never had the Italian baptism. He too will seek "to reproduce Hellas in Germany," having caught the poetic thrill of it from his friend. He will build the lofty hexameter, especially in its elegiac form, and will revel in epigrams and elegies, flinging them off after the example of Goethe in creative rivalry. But Schiller's Northern achievement is far greater than his Classic; especially his ballads are today the most popular work of the German Muse, and thus would seem to be the most native expression

of the Teutonic folk-soul. In this field again he is paralleled by Goethe, whose ballads spring from the deepest sources of literature, but are said not to equal those of Schiller in popularity, though on the whole the profounder and more poetic readers give them the preference.

Here then, we are to emphasize a salient fact of the present Epoch: the one great literary movement is composed of two poets, interacting and co-operating to a single end; each of them while pursuing his own special tendency reflects the tendency of the other also in his creations; Schiller naturally German or Romantic joins to his own native strand the Classic adopted from Goethe; while the latter, at present full of his Classic bent is stimulated by Schiller to realize his German heritage. Thus they circle about each other, double suns as it were, each in its own orbit, yet influencing the motion of the other, and both together producing one grand illumination. So they run double, each poet sharing in the other while remaining himself, whereby they become one great totality of spirit. Hence it comes that Goethe repeatedly speaks of himself as a half of this one higher process; when Schiller has passed beyond he feels that he is but the moiety left behind.

The foregoing statement is peculiarly true of their lyrical production, which rises to the best of its kind. But when it comes to what may be in general called their epic and dramatic creation, they showed a tendency to separate. Schiller became supremely the dramatic poet while Goethe leaned to the epic though by no means eschewing the drama. Still the interest is that even as different or as opposite they form one transcendent spiritual Whole which constitutes the unity of the Epoch. Each of them to be the other's adequate counterpart is spurred to his highest endeavor just in the fruitful season of life. The result is an enormous output of excellence rivaled nowhere else at that time in the literary realm; Weimar became the poetic voice of Europe, the World-Spirit spoke German during this Goethe-Schiller Epoch.

VI. No account of these spiritually twinned souls can be complete without considering their physical contrast and its effect upon both. Schiller was a perpetual invalid; when Goethe invited him to make a visit, he accepted with the proviso that he should have the privilege of being sick. He represented mortality itself in his body, ever nagging him with pain and unstringing him for work. Still he valiantly kept up the struggle, fighting death's hand at his throat for these ten

years—the mortal striving to circumvent Fate and to become immortal. No wonder he wrote tragedies; he lived them, ever reminded by suffering of his approaching evanishment. The ideal versus the real was incorporate in Schiller, who had good reason to hate the physical element in himself which tortured him so cruelly and persistently. Thus he was born fated by nature; even barely to live he had to be a fate-compeller. He seems to have had a premonition of his early dissolution, and so he wrought in defiance of illness and pain that his immortal task might be fairly done when the bell tolled.

Very different in physical equipment was Goethe, who towered up Nature's darling in form, health and activity. To be sure he had at times furious spells of illness, doubtless his body's punishment for violation of its laws. But he would get up again in recovered strength and spirit. Why should he not love nature who loved him with a sort of passion and showered him with her rarest gifts? In his physical frame the ideal lived incarnate and never had to fight for its very existence as was the case with Schiller. His organism was already an ideal realized; the fierce dualism between the two sides, which was so characteristic of Schiller's work and even of his body, was not practically present

to Goethe. So we may say that the idealism of the one and the realism of the other was primarily conditioned in their corporeal existence. By themselves they were in danger of excess, each needed the corrective of the other. Goethe's very shape was the native home of love, he was the born Phileros in outward figure, the sensuous counterpart to etherialized Schiller.

VII. There was another and deeper side to Schiller's invalidism, which Goethe did not fail to feel and of which he drew the religious analogy. The latter compares Schiller on account of his incessant pain, to the suffering Christ, and after he was gone, looked back at him with a reverential feeling akin to beholding the Crucified. So the poet meditates: "in Schiller this Christ-tendency was inborn." The sight of the visible passion of a great man who was his dearest friend was able to make Goethe realize in his heart and intellect the Christian Idea, which he saw actually embodied in that anguished frame still doing its work. The literal fact before his eyes for years affected him far more deeply than all the pictured crucifixions of which Italy was full, and from which he turned away with indifference if not with aversion. We may well suppose that his one-sided Greek world-view got a shock when he contemplated Schiller's

life-long tribulation not only patiently endured but spiritually transcended. Of this peculiar experience he has cast a shadowy image in his *Meister's Journeymanship* where he puts stress upon the religion of suffering, which is the Christian, and where he employs veneration so strikingly as an element of youthful education in his so-called Pedagogic Province. Goethe was in his way Christianized by the epiphany of Schiller whose life, suffering and death became to him an actual manifestation, or if you wish, re-incarnation of the Great Sufferer, and their common life during the present Epoch was transfigured into a unique religious experience which in his latter days he contemplated with a kind of worship. I believe that the religious tone which runs through a good deal of his *Journeymanship of Meister*, written mostly in his old age, takes its origin from his sympathy with the living sorrow of Schiller, who thus became to him a sort of sacred mediator enacting a Gospel of Suffering present, visible, real. We have often heard him say already that he could only write what he had actually experienced, making it also his confession; so in the present case he must have written what he had already lived.

We may also note in Schiller's own poetry the effect of his never-resting struggle with

the pain of existence, over which he had to rise triumphant in every piece he wrote. Hence there is in his style an uplift even of the words, an elevation of the spirit over its earthly physical portion, a winged flight of the ideal away from the real, to which Goethe on the other hand was inclined to cling, fetching down to it his ideal. Thus Schiller's Genius hoists him out of suffering through his pen, and his utterance bears deeply the stamp of such an act of exaltation. His life shows what man is to do with pain, misfortune, sorrow—transcend it, yea, transfigure it into an immortal deed.

In this way we conceive the deepest strain of Schiller's character to be mediatorial; especially was he a spiritual mediator for his friend Goethe, the estranged, isolated, solitary, reconciling the latter with himself and his world, and thereby starting again his Genius into a new era of creation which in productivity resembles the Frankfort Epoch. He needed a second Self to reflect him, to show him what he was and could still do, and to dare even correct him if he should stray. He recognized Schiller's function toward himself and cried out in joyous approval: "Go on and continue to make me acquainted with my own work and myself." Many passages of their Correspondence have this pur-

port. He sends one of his productions to Schiller and begs him to tell what it means, as he himself does not know, having written it in his supra-conscious mood: "Think it over and then as true prophet interpret my dreams." Goethe claimed that when writing he fell into a state resembling somnambulism.

It is perhaps not too much to say that Goethe won his poetic salvation through his association with Schiller. He was a lost soul till he was picked up and saved by Schiller, as he himself intimates. Still this is not to affirm that Schiller was the greater poet. Says he in a letter: "Compared to Goethe I am and remain a poetical blatherskite (*Lump*)."
Nevertheless he was aware that he possessed qualities which Goethe had not: "something remains to me and is mine which he can never reach." Moreover he had a presentiment that he would never live to round out his career. Pathetic is his forecast of a life unfinished: "I shall hardly have time to complete in myself a great and universal spiritual revolution; but I shall do what I can, and when the building at last collapses, I shall have rescued perhaps something worthy of preservation from the ruin." (From a letter to Goethe in 1794). He seems also to have had a forefeeling that Goethe was destined to fill to completeness the full cycle

of life in contrast to his own limited achievement sapped by sickness and finally cut short by fate.

VIII. In such way we seek to realize to ourselves the place of the present unique Epoch in Goethe's total life-poem, in which it performs a sovereign function different from that of any other Epoch before or afterward, centered as it is in the middle of them all. Genius now falls in love with Genius, each stirring the other to an intense productive energy, which culminates in the greatest works of both. We may call it friendship, but it was something more; each had friends outside of this tie which was singular in demanding the responsive power of creation. Goethe's Genius was the portion of him which was isolated till he found its comrade in Schiller who feels its loneliness and despair, and starts it to fresh activity and hope. Goethe was solitary because he had no Genius to love and to be loved by; that part Christiane could not fill. He had reached the nodal Epoch in his evolution when he must find his creative counterpart in order to be whole himself. He needs a complementary spirit not simply to appreciate him but to recreate him in his very creation, and thus to reveal him to himself and to bring him to his complete fulfilment. As the one solitary Genius

standing by himself he had quite done his task, and was drooping to inactivity, if not exhaustion. He must now produce not simply great works, but reproduce his Genius itself in living independent activity, which runs a creative parallel with his own. The highest act of God is to create another God quite on a par with himself. So Goethe loves Schiller's Genius creatively and without question brings it to its highest productive efficiency. And Schiller loves Goethe's Genius creatively, stimulating it and even unfolding it to its sovereign supremacy. Thus they not only made great poems, but made one another making great poems. Both at their best seemed to share in God's creative love, not so much man's—that love which primordially created the Universe.

But what then about our Phileros, the lover of love, peculiarly of woman's love? The fact is that the intensely sexed emotional nature which he has hitherto manifested drops into the background during the entire present Decennium, seeming to become quiescent with the advent of Schiller. Such is probably the most strangely elusive psychological phenomenon of his whole love-life. Hitherto the love of woman has been Goethe's chief stimulus to literary production; but now a man's love, therefore quite un-

sexed, is what stirs his fresh creative energy; his Genius has risen to love its own, its very selfhood in another Genius, which in turn impregnates it to a new birth of its highest potency. There has arisen the mutual bond of love, not of female with male, but seemingly supra-sexual, universal, as participating in the original divine essence of creation. So we may well deem it a unique manifestation not simply in Goethe's life-poem, but in all Literature.

Thus, however, our Phileros passes into a time of eclipse, not by any means dead, but reposing quietly in a state of abeyance. Take heart, O, Phileros; Fate will snatch Schiller away, and thou shalt pass out of thy obscuration; thou shalt love again in full youthful fervor, love woman again, defiant of all the envious wrinkles of old-age.

I.

Works in Partnership.

The associated life of Goethe and Schiller may be first regarded as immediately and personally co-operative in producing certain of their works. That is, they wrote some books in common, and neither of the two at times could separate his respective share of author-

ship. Then each of them would perform his distinct part in a joint production. This collaboration was specially pronounced in the earlier part of their decennial friendship. We shall select three works which illustrate various phases of their partnership in writing as well as of their deep community of feeling, whereby each seemed to supplement what was lacking in the other, thus forming a kind of common personality in which both participated yet it was over both. The works selected are *The Correspondence*, *The Xenia*, and *The Ballads and Elegies*.

I. The *Goethe-Schiller Correspondence* runs through the entire ten years and more, and lasts, according to the dated letters, from June, 1794, till April, 1805. It may well be considered a unique book in literature, inducing the reader into the very workshop of two great poets who were bringing forth a world-historical Epoch in their art. Moreover both were at the culmination of their creative power, and stimulated each other to the topmost excellence. We follow their profound study in literary forms—epic dramatic, lyric, novelistic and other lesser ones—which study they undertake not for the purpose of constructing a methodical Aesthetic, but of applying immediately their principles to produce the highest original

works. Thus it is a kind of living Poetic, hence far more vital than any philosophical treatise from Aristotle down. They are bent on becoming conscious of their artistic process that it may reach its supreme fulfilment. Both poets have had their instinctive, unconscious time—Schiller in his *Robbers* and Goethe in the products of his Frankfort Epoch—which time, though Titanic in its outbreak, they must transcend and become ordered, rational, self-knowing in their work, yet with the full spontaneous flow of their Genius held within the bounds of reason. Such is the first very suggestive lesson to be derived from this book: knowledge is not going to destroy invention, but to give it intelligent direction; philosophy is not hostile to poetry, but necessary to its perfect creation; Goethe's intuition has to be supplemented by Schiller's reflection ere it can again be productive of its poetic wealth, and achieve its true destiny. Each imparts himself to the other and thus both form one complete supereminent Whole, a kind of Overman, in them yet above them, and greater than either alone. Thus their association is not merely internal or subjective in each, but a grand objective fact, existent of itself in the world and epochal in its literature.

Goethe, the long survivor of the twain, was

well aware of the value of this *Correspondence*. Nearly twenty years after its conclusion he began to revise these letters for print; he speaks of them at the time in a letter to Zelter: "the work will be a great gift, which is offered not only to Germans, but I dare say, to mankind." When this was written, he was well aware of his place in universal literature, in which the Goethe-Schiller Epoch occupies a lofty original niche. Hence this book, which is a record of the inner evolution of that Epoch in the souls of its two protagonists, he could rightfully proclaim as a great present to the literary world. Goethe, in his dedication to King Louis I. of Bavaria, intimates the part which the work played in his personal development, since it recounts the breaking-up of his previous isolation, when he lacked a friend who could give him "an inner confidential sympathy," and when he missed all "spiritual incitement and whatever might stimulate a praiseworthy emulation." Thus the book marks the transition from his solitary Epoch to his associated life with Schiller.

The chief part of the Correspondence took place while Schiller was at Jena. But in 1799 he changed his residence to Weimar, where the two friends could communicate personally whenever they chose. So the book

droops somewhat in the latter portion. Also they had largely uttered themselves, and the zeal had become more quiescent, of course without ceasing. Besides, Schiller had evolved into his independent career as a dramatist, in which domain he had outstripped Goethe, who, however, gave him all sorts of support, practical and theoretical. Schiller's "Camp of Wallenstein," staged in 1798, was the beginning of the poet's literary autonomy; his work stood in its own right of supremacy and had no rival. This position he held till his death.

Which of the two writes the best letters, is a question which has been much discussed, and which often comes up to the reader. Goethe has generously given the palm to Schiller: "My letters are not equal to those of Schiller in internal and independent value; he was more inclined to reflection concerning persons and writings than I," and so he surpasses me. Still the fact that Goethe's are more direct and spontaneous makes a point in their favor with some people. There is no doubt that Schiller's are written with greater thought and care for expression than those of his friend. Moreover they have a different purpose from Goethe's, they seek to stimulate the solitary Genius through appreciation, in fact through recreation of his work.

II. In the famous *Xenia* the bond between Goethe and Schiller is not only co-operative and mutually instructive, each one holding a mirror up to the other after his own way, as in the *Correspondence*, but it becomes intergrown in a common work; the friendship turns to a twinship both in conception and execution. This was strikingly stated by Goethe long afterwards in a talk with Eckermann: "Often I had the thought and Schiller made the verses, often just the opposite took place; often Schiller made one line of the distich and I the other. How can anybody talk of mine and thine in such a case!" Such was indeed the most intimate stage of their association: the two brains were composing not merely the same book but the same sentence. Here we may well behold their most internal point of conjunction: two strong poetic individualities were fused into one creative act. Schiller gives his bit of evidence to the same effect in a letter to W. Von Humboldt: "There was a formal agreement between Goethe and myself that our special rights of property in the epigrams singly should never be explained—but we resolved to let the matter rest on itself to all eternity." Still the secret got out and it is known pretty well today which belong to each.

These *Xenia* are elegiac hexameters of two lines, and go back for their meter and general character to the Roman poet Martial, who, however, found his original as to purport and form in the Greek Epigram, samples of which may be seen in the Greek Anthology. Thus they are of classic birth, and were suggested by Goethe in regard to both their form and scope. Hence they show a continuation of his epigrammatic mood which has been already noted. Schiller adopted eagerly the idea, and soon surpassed the master who praised his associate's *Xenia* as "more pointed and home-hitting" than his own, and it is evident that they are more carefully composed and metered. The interesting fact here is that Schiller is appropriating Goethe's classicism, and in the best sense is learning to reproduce Hellas in Germany, which instruction he will not fail to keep up and realize. Both poets are making the Greek spirit talk German.

The chief purpose of the *Xenia* was to attack and burn up with satirical fire-brands the existent mediocrity in literature, art, and science. That was certainly a large job, for the vast majority of writers would be involved. The result was an explosion violent and wide-spread, producing what is known as the war of the *Xenia*, for the trick of the

verses was at once caught up and turned upon the inventors, often with telling effect. It was largely a bitter personal fight, which to-day is unrefreshing, and also hard to follow, since most of the people and things assailed have sunk into total night, and have left behind to us simply their obscurity. It was indeed a negative book whose object was to destroy a negation and then vanish out of the world.

Fortunately the work was so regarded by its authors, who stopped it with a single furious cannonade. Schiller writes in a letter: "Such weapons are to be used only once, in order to lay them aside forever." Goethe also declares to his ally: "After such a piece of deviltry we must occupy ourselves with great and worthy works, and transform our Protean nature into the forms of the good and noble, to the shame of our enemies." Very delightful and suggestive is it to see both the great poets getting sick of their debauch of revenge, and turning to produce great positive masterpieces, which each of them now sends forth in astonishing fecundity.* To be sure Goethe is not going to get rid of the negative strain inborn in his very nature; here in the *Xenia* he is the classic Mephistopheles who will later assume his Teutonic garb in *Faust*. As to Schiller he

has become quite classicised by his present experience, having learned to handle skillfully the Greek epigram both in its measure and meaning. Moreover he has become an integral portion of Goethe's brain as well as heart, having participated in the very act of the poet's creation.

The *Xenia* were started in 1795, the year after the first friendly interview between Schiller and Goethe, already recounted. Thus they form an early but pivotal stage in their association.

III. As a third manifestation of the Goethe-Schiller partnership we shall place the *Ballads* and the *Elegies* (not including the Roman Elegies which have already been considered). These two rubrics indicate the double character and achievement of the two poets and likewise of their whole movement taken together. The Ballad is essentially a Northern or Romantic product, a native poetic growth of the Teutonic folk; the Elegy is classic in form and suggestion, even if filled with a modern spirit—an interfusion of Hellas and Germany, or to use Goethe's ideal symbol, the marriage of Faust and Helen, or to take his acted symbol, the coupling of Goethe with Christiane. Each poet tried both kinds, in a Parnassian rivalry with the other; the culmination was the so-called Bal-

lad-year of 1797, though it was just as much an elegiac time, especially for Goethe, who produced during these months of 1796-7 his finest Elegies (*Alexis and Dora*, *Amyutas*, and *Euphrosyne*, with several others) as well as a good number of his best Ballads, headed by the famous epical Ballad entitled *The Bride of Corinth*. Schiller also, let it be repeated, was wrought up to the same dual productivity, and especially brought forth a choice lot of his Ballads, which are today the favorite poems of the German people. But he likewise took a tilt at the classic elegiac stanza and produced a noteworthy cluster of Epigrams and Elegies in the ancient manner.

Schiller would be the first to confess that he was stimulated to both these forms of poetic utterance by Goethe's precept and example. His glory is that following another in deep love and loyalty, he found himself and reached his own independent creative power. It is unjust to say that Schiller merely imitated and reflected Goethe; he did so undoubtedly, but that was only a stepping-stone to his own true Self; he was trained by a Genius to discover and realize his own Genius.

In the Ballads we find the most striking manifestation of their respective powers. Schiller was essentially dramatic, he loved the action, even the external action, for its

own sake, being full of life and movement. But Goethe's Ballads on the whole lack this outer push, they turn to the inner world and set forth its resurgences and conflicts and harmonies. Emotion rather than motion, sentiments more than sensations, were his in comparison; the play of incident was less, the play of internality was more for him; Schiller was deeply historic, Goethe deeply unhistoric. Schiller loved the moral, Goethe loved the mythical, and was strongly inclined to set forth the upper mysterious Energies as interwoven in the human deed. Hence Goethe's Ballads chiefly spring from a Mythus either borrowed or made by himself on the spot. Here lies a fundamental distinction: Schiller was not easily mythical, though he trained himself forcibly in that direction; on the other hand Goethe was at his deepest a myth-maker, and could hardly help himself when nature broke loose into creation. Hence he is epical while Schiller is dramatic. Another difference between the two is that Schiller cares little for motivation; he paints the occurrences following one another outwardly with an upspring and a delight simply in the happenings; Goethe runs to the contrary and seems ill at ease unless he can mirror the motives of the action directly or indirectly.

So much for the Northern or Romantic strain which both poets evolved to a supreme excellence. Never before or since has the Ballad, an elemental form of verse throbbing directly from the popular heart, attained such a stage of poetic affluence, and been made the bearer of so much of the highest literary culture. The Ballads of Goethe and Schiller, in their unity as well as in their diversity, through their form as well as through their content, are epochal in the history of Literature. They stream along the greater part of the present Decennium, and in the opinion of many, are its topmost product, not excepting *Wallenstein* and *Faust*.

The second strain, the Classic or Southern, is seen in the Elegies, with many a little spurt of poetry jetting up in the elegiac epigrams, which were cultivated by both poets, but must be here passed over. Their Elegies cannot be said to have ever been fully popularized, in spite of their excellence, on account of their alien classic measures. Still the culture seekers may well read this poetry as the best introduction to the source of all culture, namely the Hellenic spirit. It is still the highest part of a complete classical course; two great poets make the dry grammar and dictionary of the ancient Latin and Greek flower forth into present life. Thus

these antique-metered poems of Goethe and Schiller form the most delightful itinerary from the old world of the past into the world of today. Nowhere else in European Literature is to be found such a poetic avenue conducting us back to Rome and Hellas.

II.

Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship.

Hardly can it be blamed or praised too much; yet it contains deeply imbedded in all its errors and transgressions an eternal element. Thus it is like Goethe himself, a very human mixture of good and evil, of sinner and saint, of Inferno and Paradise. Hence stream out of it two lines of criticism, condemnatory and laudatory; indeed the same person reading it and appropriating it with open-minded impartiality is jerked through the whole gamut of damnation and laudation. Not only is Wilhelm discerned in Goethe himself who once called him "my beloved Double;" not only is he the rather mysterious and mystifying uncle, or the variable lover Lothario, or any other personage with whom he has been identified; the book itself is Goethe, its character his character, both in its strength and weakness. It is accordingly

the best picture of his Protean nature at this time, being a kind of summary of his experiences up to date, a biographic novel in his life-poem.

In origin it reaches back to the early part of his Weimar Epoch, quite contemporary with *Werther* to which the first portions of it bear frequently a resemblance in style and content. The earliest written intimation of its existence we have in Goethe's diary: "February 16, 1777—in the garden, dictated on *Wilhelm Meister*." This would imply that the work was already in full swing. It was an evolutionary product and could not be completed till time had ripened it. So it meandered underground through the Frankfort and Weimar Epochs, and took a plunge into Italy along with the author, who writes thence: "At last all will be taken up and included in *Wilhelm*"—all his experiences, observations and even personal acquaintances. Still the work would not get completed, though he put himself under the outer pressure of a promise to his publisher. So the matter stood in 1794, when his association with Schiller came to his aid with its inner incitement through appreciation and loving urgency. It may be doubted if Goethe would or could ever have finished it, at least in its present form, if the right man with the right

help had not come to him at the right moment.

Thus Schiller was a kind of collaborator with Goethe in this part of *Meister*, the one as philosopher furnishing the principles, the other as poet applying them to his art. Goethe writes to his friend: "You will not fail to recognize your influence upon the book, for certainly without our relation, I would hardly have been able to have brought the whole to a conclusion, at least not in this way. A hundred times, when I have been discussing with you theory and example, I had in mind the situations which lie before you in the novel, and I judged them silently according the principle on which we agreed." That tells the story (*Correspondence*, July 7, 1796), and many similar citations could be made from this one source. In the same letter Goethe begs "his other half," the reflective, to take a survey over "the entire mass" before it goes back to the printer, "as I am totally unable to do anything of the kind, and what I can not see through your eyes, will perhaps remain long concealed from me." He cannot behold his own as it is, or himself as he is. Hence he cries out: "how much more advantageous is it to mirror yourself in others than in yourself!" This suggests the general character of the entire

Correspondence: each letter-writer is training the other in what he lacks and thus to reach a completer selfhood. Goethe is learning to see himself, and thus to transcend his limitation. The truth is he had little power of reflective introspection and did not like it; Schiller was, therefore, his spiritual looking-glass, no doubt very favorable, still faithful even if magnifying. Goethe needed a soul to mirror him, not for flattery but for self-knowledge. Eckermann performed such a function for him in late life, but was only appreciative, hardly creative. But Schiller reflected him not alone imitatively but creatively, could enter into the genetic source itself of the work and start that to flowing in idea, and thus show wherein the execution had fallen short. He was Goethe's own revealer to himself, not in all things of course, but in some of his subtlest crooks and corners. He philosophized not only Goethe's art but Goethe's self. His letters on the poet's *Meister*, while this was in the very process of being formed show him the participator in the act of its creation, especially of the later Books. Hence the Novel belongs profoundly to the associated life of the two friends.

We have said that Wilhelm Meister is Wolfgang Goethe, or at least a large part of him in a certain stage of his career. We may

go further and say that Wilhelm Meister is Germany, especially as Goethe saw it during this time. Its tendency to disunion and national paralysis, to dreaminess and excessive speculation, to a highly cultivated and diversified subjectivity, while neglectful of a corresponding outward energy, has its shifting image in Meister. The nation's Will seemed quite hamstrung while its Intellect grew to enormous proportion, with a corresponding productivity. It became the supreme creative home of philosophy, music, and poetry—still unapproached and still to be fully appropriated by the rest of the world. But the back stroke of this intellectual plurisy was a certain national will-less ness, the folk's indifference to its own unity and concentrated endeavor as an organized whole; its Genius shunned the deed and turned inward to the spirit; its Great Men were not men of action, but men of the inner life—the philosopher, the poet, the musician—Kant and Hegel, Schiller and Goethe, Mozart and Beethoven, not to speak of other lesser, yet lofty intelligences in the same line of development.

Now we hold that Germany in this work was fulfilling a function higher than that of the nation, a duty which for a while demanded the sacrifice of national unity; she

was obeying, had to obey the bidding of the time's uppermost authority, the behest of the World-Spirit. Today it is evident that she was performing a service for universal human culture, doubtless at the expense of her particular nationality; but she got tired of that, or perchance finished her work, and turned off to the next stage. Slowly she reacted from her theoretical bent to the practical, from the Superman of Intellect to the Superman of Will, from Germany the universal to Germany the particular, passing at the same time from a dominating spiritual to a dominating material pursuit and achievement. A similar transition we may observe in Meister as he moves out of his vague and varied cultural striving to the practical domain of Lothario, from the world of appearance on the stage to the world of actuality in life. But mark! the first trend is more fully accentuated than the second.

So we dare say that Meister is Goethe or a stage of him, is Germany or a stage of it, is indeed the World-Spirit in a faint and far-off phasis which can only be glimpsed now through the historic perspective of more than a century, and from a standpoint outside of Germany. Very suggestive is the fact that the recent German biographers of Goethe discredit this novel; denying it as one of the

supreme works of Goethe, declaring it to be transcended, unpopular, quite rejected by the German folk-soul. Their report is probably true, reflecting both themselves and their country in its present reaction and disgust at its former Meister character and epoch. Still the rest of cultured mankind continue to read it and study it as a world-book, which mirrors the man, the nation and the age, hence a universally representative piece of writing, wherein lies its eternal element. Thus it is a great book when we penetrate to the heart of it, which does not lie on the surface, though a light-ballasted novel in form; masterful it is, in accord with its name, despite all its sins—and they are many—sins of omission and commission, ethical and aesthetic, charming and disgusting.

Goethe was occupied some twenty years and more in its composition, thus it was a slow deposit of his life. In October, 1797, *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* started on its printed career down time, and is still going. In fact the work kept on evolving in the author's career till his old age, when in 1829 more than thirty years later *Meister's Journeymanship* was completed. So it runs paralleled with *Faust* through all his epochal turns from his youthful start at Frankfort. As there are two parts of *Faust*, so there are

two parts of *Meister*, in fact the *Elective Affinities* was originally intended as a tale for *Meister's Journeymanship*. Thus the structural plan of this novel overarches Goethe's whole achievement. Still it is but one span in his total life-poem which we are here trying to grasp and to set forth. One of his early appreciators said to him: "What thou livest is better than what thou writest." Each of his *Meisters* and all his writ are but fragments of his total experience called life, which must be finally seen in its full cycle of realized personality.

Goethe's opinion on his own works should always be consulted even if not always accepted. For he sought to be the self-conscious artist; especially at the time when he was engaged on *Meister*, he was discussing with Schiller the nature of the great permanent forms which literature takes—epos, drama, novel—all of which he would employ creatively. The central idea of his book was continually haunting him in spite of his expressed impatience and dislike of such a way of envisaging his work. So his outburst in a talk with Eckermann: "You hunt for a central idea: that is hard to find, and is of little account when found. I should think that a rich manifold life unrolling before our eyes were in itself somewhat, without any pro-

nounced tendency." So he takes his grumble seemingly at the other man, but really at himself. In like fashion he writes in his Annals: "It is one of the most incalculable productions, regarded either in itself or in its parts; I doubt if I have myself the criterion by which to judge of it." Still he will judge of it and state its leading thought in a kind of protest: "If you must have its idea, take these words directed to Wilhelm at the end of the novel: 'You appear to me like Saul, the son of Kis, who went out to seek his father's asses and found a kingdom.' Stick to that." Not very illuminating here is the Scriptural text, or close-hitting; so he adds the following: "at bottom the whole book will say nothing but this, that the human being, in spite of all his stupidities and errors, is guided by a higher hand and attains the happy goal." So the author claims that an upper world dominates the career of his Meister, a kind of hidden providential oversight. In a letter to Schiller he gives a different turn to the kaleidoscope: "I doubt if any other unity will be found in the book than a steadily progressive evolution." That is, the hero moves regularly from one stage of development to another: which gives a hint of the manner but not of the matter. But who is the hero? Goethe is reported to

have declared that Mignon is not an episode, "since the whole work was written for this character."

These diverse opinions of the author himself may be deemed so many varying phases of the many-sided book, which is not easy to focus into one central principle. The title signifies an educational novel, a species common in the eighteenth century which was so creatively pedagogical—the century of Rousseau in his culmination, and also of the early efforts of Pestalozzi. Life is here an apprenticeship to the world-order. Even the narrow setting of a wandering theatrical troupe had been used before Goethe as the little moment's stage representing the great stage of time. It has been often questioned whether such an environment for the hero was a happy choice. Still he transcends it and passes into a different and larger sphere of activity. But all the while there is something tentative, uncentered, unwilling about him; he is hunting for his vocation yet keeps trying to do that for which he has no talent. Goethe has expressed this side of his work also: "The beginning sprang from a dim presentiment of the great truth that man will undertake what nature has denied him and will persist in practicing some art for which he has no ability." This is Goethe, espe-

cially in his many attempts to be a painter, and gives the basis for his aversion to dilettantism, almost monomaniacal. Meister is a dilettant, not merely in commerce, poetry, theater, but in the art of life. Impressionable, ever receptive to the outside sensation, especially responsive to the charm of women, he is Phileros now looking back and summoning before him the long line of female shapes through which he has passed with varied experiences in the last two decades. What a gallery of femininity, from Mariana of the first Book to Natalia of the last Book, each set forth with her own individuality, yet all forming rungs of a ladder of his evolutionary ascent! Many a woman reader resents this experimental use of her sex and throws the book into the fire. Goethe himself in a talk of 1821 called Meister "a poor dog," because of his centerless inconstant character, susceptible especially to every little flicker of the female eye which, however, was irresistibly drawn toward him, the unresisting lover Phileros. No wonder, as even love-proof Emerson could confess that everybody loves a lover.

This novel is accordingly a vast reservoir, of experiences which are put into the form of an apprenticeship to the art of life. The best way to catch its sweep is to find its or-

ganism which shows two large parts, and what we may for the nonce call an intermezzo. So we have the following outline:

I. The first five Books give Wilhelm in his theatrical environment, which passes through a number of gradations till he culminates in playing Hamlet, and concludes this part of his career.

II. The last two Books show Wilhelm in a new stage of his apprenticeship to life and art; he enters the practical sphere at Lothario's castle (Book Seventh), whence he passes to the directly cultural realm in the Hall of the Past, where he beholds antecedent stages of culture eternized in art. This has the educative tendency to universalize him (as the trip to Italy did for Goethe).

III. The Sixth Book, lying between the foregoing two parts, seems an episode, and is known as the Confessions of a Fair Soul (Carlyle's translation is *Fair Saint*). Still it has certain strands connecting it with the whole work, though under the form of an intermezzo breaking into the connected story. It may be deemed the evolution of the purely religious spirit, which comes to feel its limitation, and so takes up Art and Nature, retaining its own deepest truth yet transcending its one-sidedness. Thus it has a lesson for Wilhelm's own training in a very differ-

ent sphere. This Sixth Book is founded upon Goethe's experience with the religious mystic Fräulein Von Klettenberg, of whom an account has already been given in a former chapter.

The transition from the first part to the second part of the novel (omitting the intermezzo) is the main organic fact of the whole work. It takes various meanings according to the viewpoint of the reader. We may deem it the rise out of the mere appearance of life on the stage to its reality. Or we may say it to be the passage from a disordered existence to one ordered by society, from self-will to renunciation, from one to many or all Apprenticeships (every person being an apprentice like Wilhelm), from a Lower World of chance to an Upper World of guidance. Finally we may note the change from the Classic to the Romantic—the last Books being full of romantic incident, treatment and characters. This fact reflects a change in Goethe from his purely Italian Epoch, to his double-strained Epoch with Schiller, which unfolds creatively on both lines, the antique and the modern, or the Classic and the Romantic. The spiritual transition of Meister is the spiritual transition of Goethe at this time. Moreover the conception and the composition of the first part belong largely

to an earlier period—this part was once complete in itself and was called *Wilhelm Meister's Theatrical Mission*. But after Italy had universalized the author, such a work seemed narrow, and so in harmony with his own new culture he universalized his book and its hero by adding the second part, and carefully revising and re-styling the whole so that it would read like a homogenous product in form and matter, which on the whole it does, even if we may come upon certain reminders of the Werther Epoch.

The second part of the work is, then, distinctive through Goethe's attempt to construct an Upper World for the novel, its epic or providential element somewhat like Homer's Gods. He evidently felt the deep necessity of such a supernal Order over his work. Here we may note the Sixth Book, which is a unique religious experience, can be regarded on this side as a bridge leading over from the lower to the higher realm. For in the first part as above described, the movement seems quite left to itself, going pretty much whither it listeth like the anchorless wind; the man and the book appear as if handed over to fate or rather accident, and this is Wilhelm's spiritual conviction as well as his conduct in this part. And yet mid all these wanderings he was secretly under guid-

ance, not unseen by a Providence which now and then steps out of the air and speaks a warning word, and which in the second part is to manifest itself openly in its own right, and even as an organization of which Wilhelm is to become a member.

It may be added that the German critic of today usually rejects this second part of *Meister*, declaring it to be mystical, unreal, romantic. He dislikes it for the very qualities which at the time of its appearance made it a great and much-read favorite. Hence the book has become a kind of touchstone for marking the difference between the present Germany and Goethe's Germany. Before me lie two eminent recent biographers of the poet, both of whom prefer the first or the rambling theatrical part to the second or ideal part with its organized Providence. In like manner we hear in Homeric criticism that "the Gods do not count," being at most a cunning piece of poetical machinery.

On its literary side, there is a plastic sense and perfection which show how deeply Goethe was transformed by his stay in classic Italy. One feels the plasticity of his words, as they flow serene, limpid, transparent into sentence and paragraph, and build up before us a Greek temple of speech. His sunniness of style is that of the shining statue of the

Olympian who has whelmed the old dark Gods into gloomy Tartarus, and who now rules above in the daylight of clear outline. Hence we ramble mid the sculpure of his many characters which rise and pass before us like plastic shapes in an antique gallery. Verily the Titans of the Frankfort Epoch lie chained in the underworld. Such is the dominant classical strain of this work, which, however, is not exclusive, for there drops into it as it were from an invisible upper source a mysterious unsunned, unclassical element which has always caught the eye of the romanticist with his look into the Beyond.

What Goethe said of his works in general is true of his *Meister*. It contains many a confession in regard to his life; especially Christiane and his boy, both of them outlawed by his deed, are often imaged directly as well as indirectly, along with the penalty which is harassing his soul, especially by way of anticipation for the future. We shall make only one brief citation (Book VIII, Chap. 2), which shows the father's anxious terror, as he looks upon his illegitimate scion (here named Felix) asleep in innocence: "O who knows what trials are before me! how sharply bygone transgressions will punish me!" Certainly some anguish speaks in this. He prays to Fate: "Take not away from me

this treasure which I now possess"—the one child left to him. "Should this best part of myself be snatched away, should this heart be torn from my heart, farewell reason and understanding, and may madness destroy my very consciousness ere death brings on the long night." Such was the tragic wail which rose from the domestic hearth some seven or eight years after his "marriage of conscience" with Christiane. Certainly he heard again the song of the Fates whose echo we cannot help catching in the preceding passage; throughout this book too he feels the "conflict between him and the Gods" as he visioned it in the case of Tantalus "whelmed into gloomy Tartarus," for surely here is gloom enough. Great is the parent's affection, rising into harrowing anxiety, for his natural son whom he now calls Felix, who, however, is to become Infelix to himself, to his father, as well as to his own wife and children. Some such anticipation of destiny we may feel in the undercurrents of this *Meister*, as we catch a foreglimpse of Tantalus who "looks on his child and shakes his head."

The farthest-reaching and deepest-searching problem of Goethe's own life is suggested in the First Book by the appearance of Marianne, who represents illicit love with its illegitimate offspring. Such was his deed of

Tantalus which called down upon him the Judgment of the Gods with which he wrestled all his days, and which from now on gives the innermost thread which winds through his life-poem. A gigantic struggle with the Fates of his own deed we witness, one considerable phase of which stands recorded in this Apprenticeship. As already stated, Phileros is now working out the tragic side of his in-born character, feeling the counterstroke of love itself, yet without becoming tragic on his part, since he through his Genius as the Fate-compeller can outface the very wrath of Doom, singing his own *Dies irae* as his paean of salvation.

III.

Goethe's Epical Mood.

During these years uprose in the poet what we may call his epical mood and became overwhelming in its push for utterance. Undoubtedly it sprang from a renewed study of Homer, with whom he had been more or less familiar from youth. But after his classical experience in the South and the contemplation of Greek Art, the old bard of Hellas began to have for him an altogether new meaning and to drive him to poetic creation

or rather re-creation. He commenced to feel that out of Homer unfolded that beautiful world which he had beheld with such rapture in Italy. Thus Goethe has pushed back to the fountain-head of the antique in all its forms—poetry, sculpture, architecture, in fact civilization generally. Such an outreach he had not attained during his Italian Journey, in which he had enough to do if he would appropriate what was immediately present to his senses. But now after years of deep brooding and study he has mounted up to the ideal genetic source of what he saw there realized, especially in its artistic manifestation. Homer's work appeals to him directly for it is poetry and so is cognate with his own deepest genius, which starts at once its creative energy, seeking to reproduce and to transfuse that old Homeric world into his native speech and consciousness.

Such bursts forth our poet's present epical mood, since Homer was the father of the epos as a literary form for all time, and is now the father of Goethe's chief productive bent. To be sure this is but a stage of him which he will embody in writ and then transcend, being only a single phase of his total poetic fulfilment. Thus Goethe sings old Homer's strain, making it one canto of his complete life-poem, or one note of his total

song. Very intimate becomes their acquaintance, though separated by more than twenty-five centuries. Indeed for a time Homer rises to being Goethe's Bible; the latter calls the Homeric poems his *Breviary*, from which he reads his daily prayers, communing with the Greek Gods and their Olympian Order through their revealer, the poet. Thus Goethe, often titled the old heathen, not only learned but lived the Homeric world-view that he might make his own the native epical consciousness of the aforetime. Worshipfully he sought to share in the form-creating spirit of Hellas by getting back to its primal origin.

Another kindred phenomenon we may stress in this connection: Goethe's unique sympathy with and loving mastery over the hexameter, the epical verse. He made it the responsive vesture of his Genius in his present mood; his soul seemed naturally to take this antique measured shape, living and loving in it. The result is the hexameter has been naturalized in both branches of Teutonic speech, German and English, not without strenuous and even abusive opposition. It is, however, true that the poet will get over this hexametral spell, but not till he has fully uttered it and made it an integral strain of the time's measured speech as well as of his own life-poem. The hexameter is indeed the

outer sensible appearance of the classic Goethe poetizing himself, or we may see in it Greek Homer re-incarnating himself in German Goethe—an antique body with a modern soul, which thus takes a dip back into its pre-existent shape, in order to be wholly itself and round out its evolution.

We are not surprised then to hear that Goethe overflowed with epics during these years. Some remained mere conceptions or designs, like *The Chase* which the poet long afterward wrote out in prose and called *Nouvelle* (translated by Carlyle in his *Miscellanies*). Another conception was the epic of Wilhelm Tell which he conceived on a visit to Switzerland in 1797, at the view of the grandeurs of the scenery, and on hearing the story of its hero. The hexameters, he says, began to whistle through him, though none, it seems, were written down, while the action and characters would play out before his imagination. But when he came back to Weimar, he, after some brooding, imparted his material to Schiller, who made out of it his famous drama. The truth is Goethe was not the poet to write the poem of Wilhelm Tell, who is the hero of freedom, an anti-Goethean theme, especially during the French Revolution, and probably at any time, if we may judge by his *Egmont*. But for Schiller it was

just the subject suiting his temperament and his genius.

We know that Goethe worked a good deal at Homer in Italy, especially during his Sicilian trip, where the *Odyssey* rose prominently into his vision. But the peculiar fact is that then his bent was toward dramatic composition in classic form; so he conceived of a *Nausicaa* and even of a *Ulysses*, thus dramatizing the shapes of old Homer. These works, however, were not realized; he uttered his Italian dramatic mood in his Trilogy (already considered). But now the epic strain, doubtless an original though as yet implicit element of his poetic self, rises to the surface and insists upon expression as never before or afterward. It must have been nursed by the composition of his *Meister*, which has not a few analogies to the epos. Then his *Reynard the Fox* gave its discipline, initiating him into the scope and soul of the hexameter, especially when talking in German. At any rate there bubbles up from depths hitherto unseen his epic mood which asserts itself for several years. We have already noticed that his ballads are dominantly epic in their treatment, while Schiller's manner is dramatic. The epos requires in some form or other an upper world or supernal order playing into the deeds of

its hero; a providential over-sight co-operates with man's action to bring him to his heroic goal. We have already heard Goethe declaring such to be the leading thought of his *Meister's Apprenticeship*. Therein the poet himself was apprenticed to Providence in his earthly discipline, and thus has realized in himself the epical consciousness as never before. Such is his present fundamental experience which his Genius must throw out into art.

Two works survive which mirror this nodal turn in Goethe's life-poem—*Hermann and Dorothea*, a completed product, and the *Achilleis* which remained a torso with good reason, being a conception impossible of birth in spite of long and wrenching labors-pains. Both are hexametral, reflecting Goethe's classic tendency, though in different ways—one being the way of success, the other of failure. In a letter to Voss (1796) Goethe speaks of his delight in passing from his novel to his epos: "I am very glad that I see this work (*Meister*) at last behind me, as its nature is not purely poetic. Now I can go at something else not so lengthy and more satisfactory. Soon you shall hear the announcement of an epical work," which had indeed been many months pulsating for utterance underneath the laborious duty of fin-

ishing first his novel. The intensity of the rebound of his loosened Pegasus is indicated in Schiller's report to a friend at this time (September, 1796), which describes Goethe's rush of creation in starting his *Hermann and Dorothea* as follows: "Every day for nine days in succession he has written down over one hundred and fifty hexameters!" But they all had to be carefully revised afterward, as they could hardly have been metered during a wild ecstasy of this sort. With such a furious orgasm of creative energy his repressed epical mood crushed in upon him and kept him at work for years.

Still this native paroxysmal Muse of his must now be wooed to a classic serenity, she cannot go careening madly heels over head as she did in his Frankfort Epoch, for Goethe has been in Italy. The deep throb of emotion is to be retained and fostered, still it must not become explosive but plastic, formful not formless. The poet spoke of this epical time to Schiller: "All the advantages which I have turned to account, I have learned from formative art." Thus the Classic and the Romantic, the Greek and the German are blended in an artistic expression more universal than either taken by itself.

I. In his *Hermann and Dorothea* the poet produced a work which took hold of the na-

tional spirit in its depths, and has remained a permanent German favorite. But it is a good deal more, namely a world-book, in which all peoples of universal culture will find not only delight but also an image of their own spiritual evolution, a symbol of what has taken place in the World's History, though reflected in the humblest idyllic environment. We have here Goethe's happiest interpenetration of the old and the new, of the Antique and the Teutonic, the poetic marriage of the lofty classized poet with his own German folk, whereof Christiane will rise up as representing his poem and himself in the living deed. The title of the book is undoubtedly Goethe's own thought and purpose; what does it mean? The name of the woman is Greek, and she comes from the outside as if she might be an emigrating Helen; the name of the man is Teutonic, yea of a primeval Teutonic hero, who in the hoary aforetime resisted the inbreaking Roman and his classic world. Now behold their love and marriage, Hermann and Dorothea, a kind of foreshow of the later nuptials of Faust and Helen. Such suggestiveness lurks already in the title, double yet united, which indeed preludes the deepest fact of the poem.

On the other hand comes streaming down into this small rural community the mightiest

event of the age, indeed of modern European history, the French Revolution. Goethe says of himself: "I have aspired to reflect from a little mirror the great movements and mutations taking place on the world's stage." Here, then, we catch a glimpse of his epic treatment; an upper movement plays down into the petty village, nothing less than the World's History, which determines the present destiny of the hero and heroine. No Greek or other mythical instrumentality is employed, but the time's supreme reality is taken in its own historic form and value, voiced of course by individuals of the poem. So the greatest will image itself in the least with the full fresh particularity of poetry. Hence we may well name the work an idyllic *epos*.

Phileros is of course present—he cannot be left out of any work which pulses from Goethe's heart; the action pivots on an affair of love, and the two leading characters are lovers, whose happy end is marriage. But strangely, our Phileros has turned over a new leaf of his life and literature: he has become deeply, sympathetically institutional. The State, the Church, and especially the Family, are all represented in their immediate positive reality without a breath of protest; indeed, if there be any criticism in this

regard, one will feel that the poem has too little social conflict; only in the far-off horizon glimmers the great world-historical collision of the age which has sent its line of victims into the small village, and thus stirred its emotional life. The whole action runs right contrary to Goethe's domestic conduct on its institutional side, and does not tally with much that he has set forth in his antecedent novel. What means the change? From this viewpoint, Goethe's *Hermann and Dorothea* is one of his literary confessions in which he writes down his repentance. He has now had for some years a family, but an uninstitutional family, and bitter has been his experience. In one sense he, as minister of State, has been above the law, and he has not been directly haled before its tribunal to answer for his violation. Still he has been personally condemned, and his family damned to social outlawry. Thus he has taken a crucial lesson in the significance of institutions, especially of the one which he has openly defied. Hence we cannot help feeling some surprise at the deep and strong institutional emotion which throbs everywhere through this poem, and makes it popular in the best sense, for the people are wedded to their institutions, if they have any love at all. So we may well see in this work Goethe again

at his confessional, as he sets forth in his poetic art a stage of his long penitential journey of life, which results from an intense heart-felt experience of his own transgression.

Like all of Goethe's highest works his *Hermann and Dorothea* has been prolific in the World's Literature. Its most famous child is doubtless our American Longfellow's *Evangeline*, also hexametral, idyllic, and a love-story which has been fully as popular as Goethe's and which has had a great influence upon English verse. Still there is a wide difference between the two productions; *Hermann and Dorothea* is far more profoundly motived than *Evangeline* which is an ideal school-girl's poem, such designation hinting both its excellence and its limitation. In Germany Voss' *Luise*, which antedated Goethe's work, was formerly much compared with it and sometimes preferred to it; but to-day, according to the critics, *Luise* has quite fallen aback, while *Evangeline* more than holds its own still; and aside from its purely poetic value it has been the main factor in calling up the great metrical fight over the hexameter in English—the hottest and most lasting contest in the history of prosody, and it is by no means yet over. The battle is really for the liberty of versifying in accord with

the new time and new poetry. Whitman broke loose from the old metrical fetters, and created an epoch in spite of his many sins and follies. It should never be forgotten that the English hexameter, along with the German, is not the Greek or Latin; it is a free-moving measure of six feet, each foot having two or three syllables. Thus it has a marvelous inner freedom of movement within its six recurrent beats. Instead of being ancient it is really the most modern of true poetic measures, and, as we believe, has a future. At present our versifiers seem bent upon breaking away from all fixed recurrence of the beat, and to revel in irregular rhythms, rhymed and unrhymed. This choral tendency has its undoubted place in prosody; still it is only a part of the great totality of versified utterance. In like manner the accented hexameter in Teutonic tongues has asserted its place, being peculiarly adapted to the idyllic epos. To have revealed this fact is the merit of Goethe's work, without which *Evangeline* would never have been written. To be sure Goethe generously acknowledged that he got his hint from Voss. If Tennyson had been master of the English hexameter, and had employed it for his "Idylls of the King," his work might have rivaled Goethe and Longfellow in the same

field. But Tennyson's metrical ear was very narrow in its range, though exquisitely refined as far as it went.

It may be added that *Hermann and Dorothea* exhibits the modern heroism of every-day life; it heroizes the unheroic through humble service. A non-aristocratic poem by the aristocratic Goethe (though he resents the epithet), it deals with the simple burgher-life of a small village, which accepts itself as transmitted from the indefinite past, and inquires not after its origin. How different an American town on the frontier, which is the product of a great migration and knows whence it came! Active community-builders are its people, not merely the passive recipients of inherited forms; it has often a French Revolution going on inside itself, not outside. And its life always connects with the State and the Nation, whereof in Goethe we hear very little, except that the youth Hermann at the close declares his willingness to fight for his fatherland and home. Quite a burst of patriotism for unpatriotic Goethe! Still the true heroic character of the poem is not the man but the woman—yes, again the woman.

II. The second significant product of Goethe's epic mood is the *Achilleis* whose hero belongs to antiquity and specially to Homer.

The poet has come to the conclusion that "the epos, as a form of poetry, is the one most suited to my years, and harmonizes best with my present inclination as well as my circumstances." No longer young, not yet old, he is turning toward his fiftieth year, which he deems just the epical time of life. His idyllic epos of *Herman and Dorothea* has had a wonderful success, which has spurred him to try his hand at the loftier heroic epos in a kind of rivalry with the old Hellenic bard, whose hero Achilles he will present in a new poem which lies between the Iliad and the Odyssey, and in a manner connects them together. Thus he writes to Schiller hinting his plans: "I am investigating whether still another epic poem is not ensconced between the death of Hector (Iliad) and the departure of the Greeks for home" (Odyssey). There is no doubt that Schiller sees the danger of such an attempt on the part of the German poet, and in his answer gently warns him "against quitting his native soil, and running counter to his own time." Do not try to go back thousands of years and be an old Greek poet—you will surely fail. "Your beautiful call is to be a citizen of both poetic worlds," ancient and modern, moulding your German spirit into a classic form.

This sound advice Goethe did not heed; if

not a Homer, he would still be a Homerid, as he hints. So he sets to work, and in 1799 the first canto gets done, but he cannot budge the work further. The chief difficulty lies in Homer's Upper World of the Gods, in whom Goethe does not believe, and who, therefore, become subjective playthings or external machinery of the poem. Thus the supreme epic element of an over-ruling divine order simply vanishes. For instance the intervention of the Goddess Aphrodite turns to a fanciful sport of love; she is no longer truly mythical but paramythical—a character which suits Goethe's Roman Elegies but not the Homeric epos.

Still our Phileros could not help showing his deepest nature in this far-off theme of hoary antiquity. The Greek hero Achilles had to fall in love with the Trojan maiden Polyxena, and thereby in some way meet his fate. This cataclysm was to happen in later cantos which were never written. The sole surviving torso has its merit, but also its admonition. Goethe worried over the subject a good deal, having grown very fond of it as well as ambitious to be "the last Homerid"; but the inherent dissonance of the theme kept getting louder in his soul, till he threw the whole torment overboard, and with it seemingly went all desire of writing any more

epic poetry. Thus his present mood came to an end, after haunting him for some years, and finding expression in one supreme achievement.

Accordingly Goethe in his *Achilleis* runs counter to his Genius which demands a content immediately experienced by him, even if he should clothe it in antique form, as he does his *Iphigenia*. He is not to abjure his own consciousness and that of his time to become old Homer, who can in truth pray to Apollo, but Goethe cannot. Still he has acquired one experience in this broken-off poem: he has pushed his classicism beyond itself and has begun to feel its limitation. But he is not done with it yet.

IV.

Goethe's Reversion to the Drama.

Noteworthy is the fact that Goethe's dramatic bent began to stir in him once more, after his epical mood had started to wane. This was a reversion to one of his earliest tendencies reaching back to Leipzig and to his Frankfort time. Later in Italy his poetic trend again ran to the drama, as we see by the composition of his Trilogy already considered. But after exercising his Genius

some ten years in the novelistic, lyrical and epic spheres, he returns to his previous dramatic form of expression. Then there is no doubt that the great success of Schiller's dramas, to which he had largely contributed, awakened in him a fresh ambition to exert his skill and experience in the same field. Besides, we are to remember that Goethe never could content himself for any great length of time with one kind of literary expression. His Genius required the whole realm of letters in its various channels to utter his universality. This is indeed the chief interest of his life, which, taken as a whole was an ever-flowing reservoir of literary forms, not to speak of his other manifold activities, scientific, social, political, artistic. To be sure in literature alone lay the deepest and most abiding strain of his spiritual being.

Accordingly we are now to witness Goethe in his third great upburst of dramatic authorship. The first may be represented by his *Götz Von Berlichingen*, omitting other less considerable efforts before it and after it in the Frankfort Epoch. The second notable upburst took place a dozen years and more afterwards, the Italian Trilogy we may call it as it shows the influence of classic Italy. But now after another long spell of dramatic quiescence the Goethe-Schiller Ep-

och of Goethe's productivity in the field of the drama breaks out afresh and lasts several years. The first distinct designation of the new resurgence in him may perhaps be caught from the brief jotting in his diary under the date of December 6, 1799: *The Natural Daughter*. Such is the name of the new play which he is incited to plan and compose from reading a book of French memoirs which recounts the troubles of an illegitimate daughter of the princely house of Bourbon-Conti of France. It should be added that before this date in the Correspondence between Schiller and Goethe we may glimpse many a little throb of the rising dramatic impulse in the poet.

The above-mentioned three epochal stages in the evolution of Goethe's dramatic work can be specially characterized as follows: the first is his immediate, native, Teutonic overflow of Titanism (*Götz*); the second shows his subdued, formful, classic spirit (*Tasso*); the third on the whole will take up both his previous tendencies and will culminate in two dramas, one of which is Classic in form (*The Natural Daughter*), and the other is Teutonic and Romantic (*The First Part of Faust*). Both these plays belong to the present Goethe-Schiller Epoch, and reveal its double character throughout, especially as regards

Goethe, though Schiller had in himself the same twofoldness of literary production. Accordingly we shall concentrate attention upon these two dramas as manifesting the inherent nature of this Epoch, and bringing it to a conclusion.

I. The most obvious fact of *The Natural Daughter*, is the title, and its direct connection with one of the deepest-searching experiences of Goethe's whole life which may be summed up in the one brief sentence: he had a natural son. This son was his only surviving child, the source of a torturing paternal solicitude for a number of reasons, and the object of his most intense love. It is no wonder then that when he read these memoirs of an outlawed child he at once called up his own boy then some ten years old, also illegally born and socially tabooed in spite of the position and fame of the father. Such must have been the primary fact which led to the selection of this theme by Goethe who could write nothing except what he had taken out of the book of his personal experience. But why did he fling into the face of his public such an unsavory title of his play? It was a challenge to the world; from much persecution or rather punishment for his deed, he had grown reckless, yea vengeful in word and attitude. He might have labeled his

drama *Eugenia*, after the beautiful name of the heroine; and so he did often designate it in his journals and letters with a peculiar fondness. But he would not flinch before society's gossipy clamor, and so he still further called down the penalty of his conduct upon his production in whose very forehead he branded the scarlet stigma of his life's supremely tragic deed, with a strangely fatal cynicism.

Such was the ominous title which everybody read on the play-bill, read doubly and could not help so reading it. This undercurrent of satirical scandal provoked by the name was voiced by Herder who in a conversation with Goethe praised the piece but suddenly blurted out: "I like your Natural Daughter better than your natural son." The result was an immediate and permanent dissolution of their long friendship. Verily tact was not a virtue of the Herderian tongue, be it the husband's or the wife's. Goethe has not mentioned the demonic taunt, but he has recorded "the terrific feeling which seized me; I stared at the man, but said nothing; the many years of our intimate life terrified me in this dreadful symbol. So we separated and I never saw him afterwards." But Herder only spoke out what everybody was thinking or privately whispering in mockery; Goethe

he must have known all this, and he indicates that Herder's act was merely "symbolic" of what was universally taking place. Still he was steeled to the last point of public defiance; even the name of his illegitimate heroine, Eugenia (which means the well-born), seems to have been chosen and doted upon in a spirit of malicious irony against Weimar, Germany, Europe, yes against the future. Such then was Herder's bodeful word which shook Goethe like the sudden crack of Doom.

Now let us glance in the other direction and listen to what Goethe himself says about his purpose in composing the present drama: "My plan was to make a vessel into which I could pour all that I had written and thought concerning the French Revolution and its consequences with fitting earnestness." Thus his intention was to produce a grand world-drama having as its content the mighty historic event of his age. The whole was to be a Trilogy in the old Greek sense with one leading character running through the three parts. Thus the illegitimate scion of a noble stock was somehow to be elevated into the heroic bearer of the French Revolution. Certainly a daring, indeed defiant conception it is, which we have to see springing out of his own immediate personal experience. But

such a plan could not be carried out; only one part of the Trilogy was ever completed, and that was very incomplete though done in five acts. Goethe had little historic sense; repeatedly he sneers at the World's History in talk and writ. Again he re-enacted the defects of his *Egmont* as an historic play.

The drama has its place in the life-poem of Goethe since it reflects powerfully the father's relation to his natural son who is now an adolescent requiring a right education unusually difficult under the circumstances, and who is getting fully conscious of a painful social situation. What is to become of the boy? The parental love and the gnawing anxiety we can catch in the play from the words of the parental Duke, and we often have to think of the son when we hear the aspirations of the like-conditioned daughter. What a heart-throbbing eagerness on her part to become legitimate! In such passages the poet, drawing from the deepest wells of his direct present experience is at his best. But there is a totally different strand in the work; the stiff formal, icy Goethe weaves also his part into the action. From this element sprang the famous dictum of a contemporary critic, Huber, who labeled the work "marble-smooth and marble-cold"—a rubric which has clung to it till today. But only half-true is the

phrase, since Goethe's personal portion glows like a white-hot furnace, even if the courtly part is cold and hard as a statue. So the poem has in its style and spirit a profound dualism; Goethe's classicism may be noted here in its two extremes, on the one hand lapsing to mere external pompous statuesqueness, or on the other hand filled with his most passionate heart-beats.

Thus again we have to trace here one of Goethe's literary confessions, and to mark the inherent bent of his Genius in the fact that when intending to set forth the World's History in one of its supreme collisions, he drops back into his domestic conflict as being just then his experience most urgent for utterance. It should be noted that Goethe during the composition of this drama fell very ill, so that for a time he lay face to face with death, at whose appearance he could not help questioning Fate as his boy stood at his bedside with anxious sobs: "If I die, what is to become of thee, my son?" So when we enter into the heart-beat of this work, we find a seething undercurrent of apprehension which surges out of his own tragic deed, a dread presentiment of what is to happen to his child as he forefeels into what kind of a man such a youth is to unfold, who all his life has been and is still to be the victim of a

guilt not his own. Have we not the right to imagine that Goethe at such a solemn hour again heard that awful Hymn of the Parcæ which he had sung out of his own soul more than ten years before and which echoes through all his creative work like the chant of doom, and which we may name his *Dies iræ* bursting up into his life-poem along its entire course.

Still Goethe maintains his defiant negative attitude, refusing to comply with the behest of the social order. Hence he will evolve in time his Mephistopheles, really his own fiend, of whom we catch psychical glimpses in this *Natural Daughter*, already unfolding "the Spirit that denies."

Two other dramatic attempts in classic form during this time can only be noted in passing. The Greek title *Palaeophron and Neoterpe* indicates a bright brief skit. Goethe also wrought at his classic drama called *Helena*, but could not now finish it; some of it was long afterwards included in *The Second Part of Faust*. But the crowning literary fact of the present Epoch is the completion of *The First Part of Faust*, usually regarded as Goethe's supreme effort, and as a sovereign masterpiece of the World's Literature. To its consideration we shall devote a few thoughts regarding its place in his life-poem.

II. The completion of *The First Part of Faust* belongs decidedly to the Goethe-Schiller Decennium. Without the association of his poetic friend, it may be doubted if Goethe had ever fulfilled the chief task of his life and finished his greatest work. Already in 1794, the first year of their bond, Schiller began gently to nudge Goethe by asking for the privilege of reading the unprinted fragments of *Faust*. The next year brought a somewhat stronger prodding, and so it went on for the whole ten years of their mutual labor with increasing urgency, till at last the poem was finished, but Schiller never saw the final stroke of its completion.

As already indicated (see preceding p. 167) the first form of the written *Faust* goes back to the Frankfort Epoch of the poet's Titanism. Then doubtless arose the *Urfaust* so-called, or the primordial *Faust*, the manuscript of which was brought to light as late as 1887, more than a century after its composition. Goethe had already published in 1790 his *Faust a Fragment*, omitting important portions which already existed. Finally in 1808 the completed *First Part* reached publication which had been delayed quite two years on account of the unsettled condition of Germany.

Of the two leading strands which run

through this Goethe-Schiller Epoch, *Faust* represents most emphatically in its First Part the Northern, the Teutonic, the Romantic, in contrast with the Southern and Classic. Thus it indicates a considerable change in the poet's artistic consciousness. There is no doubt that to make this transition produced in him a great repugnance; it seemed to work like a disgusting medicine which, however, he had to take if he would become the whole of himself and of his time. One is amused to watch him making wry faces (in his *Correspondence*) as he looks at his task. He heaps upon his *Faust* all sorts of vituperative epithets: it is "a barbaric composition," the very opposite of beautiful plastic classicism; it is the native product of the foggy North as distinguished from the sunny South, of wild Teutonic fantasy over against serene Hellenic repose. He bemocks it as a hybrid monstrosity, naming it "a tragelephus," that is a goat-deer, for Goethe intended to unite in it his two life-lines of art, the Teutonic and the Classic. So he spouts venom at his own greatest creation, of which poison he had to relieve himself before going to work.

It is evident that a large portion of the poem had already been written, but that a huge chasm gaped in it which Goethe had never

been able to fill up. Seemingly it was the sight of this chasm which would unfailingly bring on a paroxysm of damnation. It must have been to him a kind of Hell-pit through which he had to pass and meet old Splay-foot face to face in furious tussle. Moreover it could only have been a direct personal experience, else he would never, according to his own repeated statements, have poetized it, or have heard the call of the Muse. So with many foul names and curses and blasphemies, he has to tackle again Mephistopheles, the old black Teutonic Devil himself whom he once deemed to have banned forever from his world of classic sunshine. Yea, his task, as he peers into that yawning abyss of Tophet, which opens murky and bridgeless in the very heart of his book, appears desperate and unfathomable by mortal vision. Hence, with maledictions upon his supreme poetic vocation, he rebounds again and again, only to be scourged back to his work by the Powers presiding over his destiny.

But what then is this chasm from which the poet shrank in awe and execration for more than thirty years? It can be distinctly seen by the reader who compares the three redactions of *Faust*. The first of them belongs to the Frankfort Epoch and is the *Urfaust*, usually dated 1774-1775; the

second is the Fragment of 1790; these two incomplete stages show one great omission when compared with the completed First Part of 1808. This hiatus lies between lines 253 and 1415; that is, 1162 lines were added in one long passage of the completed edition, making more than one-fourth of the total poem (the figures are taken from Loeper's accurate count). There are other omissions, some small and some large; but they are of little significance alongside of this one colossal omission which makes the Stygian demon-haunted chasm yawning before Goethe during this entire Decennium. We may well suppose that this literally infernal job, imposed upon the poet by the imperial edict of his deepest Genius was what made him think at times of fleeing again to Italy with its bright upper realm in order to escape from the gloomy nether world of Teutonic diablerie.

Now if we peer into this huge dark chasm and seek to explore by the light of the completed *First Part* what monstrous megatherium lies hidden there, we find that it is nothing else but the modern Devil himself in his various stages of growth. We shall name it the evolution of Mephistopheles from the primordial No of Faust and of the age, through many grades of metamorphosis represented

by the little poodle, the huge animals, the traveling scholastic “the spirit that always denies,” till we listen to the diabolic personality bargaining with Faust for the sale of his immortal soul. Such is the germinal center of the whole poem, of both its Parts, First and Second. This, too, was the core of the poet’s grand struggle of creation, the evolution which made him “sweat terribly” for so many years. Mark, then, the line of evolving shapes of destruction from Faust’s primal negation till his contract with Satan signed in his own blood, when he is ready to go forth with his new companion “to see both worlds, the great and the little” (we may be permitted here to refer the reader who wishes to trace step by step this evolution of Mephistopheles, to our *Commentary on Goethe's Faust, Part First*).

There remains the question concerning the literary development which trained Goethe to complete his work during this present Epoch. Already we may observe him dealing with his Romantic heritage in *Meister's Apprenticeship*, especially in the latter portion. But more decisively he began to poetize the Teutonic spirit in his ballads which culminate in 1797, the so-called ballad-year; the Northern mythus he likewise employed in various ways. His *Faust* is a German fable,

even if it strikes its early roots far back in the ages. Along with his ballads in 1797 we see him tackling his task as it were on the outside by writing the Prelude and the Prologue to his Faust drama. He veers off for a while to composing the more congenial classic portion, called the *Helena*, but he finds that he must drop it and take up the more imperative problem, which is his poetic fight with the Devil. Another deflection toward the classic side was his *Natural Daughter*, which he could not finish as a Trilogy, but whose disciplining composition drove him to complete his evolution of Mephistopheles. Thus amid many reactions and divagations he at last brings his infernal labor to its conclusion.

The deepest fact of the poet's experience during these years, is that he evolved Mephistopheles in himself, in his own life. Through his defiance of the social order, he became an embodied negative; he echoed himself in the line "I am the spirit that always denies." His mood turned Mephistophelean, as we may often note in the *Natural Daughter* which is indeed a kind of overture to his generation of Mephistopheles, indicating the true origin of the fiend to lie in Goethe's domestic violation. Thus his own negative deed has begotten his devil armed with the torments

of Hell. The culmination is reached in the famous curse of Faust which embraces in its sweep the entire social world, including specially "wife and child," the dearest objects which had caused the bitterest woes, chiefly through his own transgression.

Such is the personal experience which lies behind the poet's greatest and most compelling character. Undoubtedly the denial of Mephistopheles was also intellectual and philosophic; it took up the time's speculative negation emanating in Germany particularly from Kant, whom Goethe studied. But *Faust* is also a confession of the poet, yea in a sense is the confession of the age which acknowledges its devil, and thus gets to know itself better. The negative Eighteenth Century, increasingly negative in its thought from Locke to Kant, and finally manifesting its practical negation of the whole transmitted world of institutions in the catastrophic French Revolution, has found its deepest and mightiest poetic voice in the *First Part of Faust*, especially in this central portion which we call the evolution of Mephistopheles. Now Goethe in his anti-institutional deed at Weimar had personally gone through the same evolution, and thus by means of his own experience was enabled to become the poet of his age.

Still Goethe does not perish of his own curse, though it whirls back mightily upon himself, and serves up to him his own negation. So we may likewise read in this poem the penalty of the damning deed uttered in the most crushing words. But just this utterance is the penitential process which brings relief and atonement; literature is again the poet's way of expiation, and of rescue from the fiend. Thus he not only for himself but for many an erring mortal creates a new salvation in this world-poem of *Faust*, when the old ways do not suffice. Such must always remain its deepest worth and significance.

We may hear this turn from death to life, from destruction to construction, in the very depths of Faust's universal curse, when the song of the spirits hovers over him in sorrowing chorus: "Woe! woe! thou hast it destroyed, the beautiful world," namely of man's institutional order. But after this painful outcry there rises quite the opposite exhortation: "Thou mighty one of the Earth's sons, build it up again more grandly, build it up in thy bosom!" This hints the affirmative outcome which lurks just in Faust's last negation. So he is to be saved even here at the lowest circle of his Inferno, where is glimpsed already the germ of the *Second Part of Faust*. Still there is no deny-

ing that Goethe became the Devil in order to get rid of the Devil, exorcising him at last through the magic of his pen, not merely for himself but for a vast array of readers.

In such fashion we seek to correlate the present work, deemed Goethe's supreme poetic creation, with his other works, written and even unwritten. Not all that he lived has he put into letters. This Faust poem is, therefore, but one strain in Goethe's entire life-song, some outline of which we are here trying to limn in its totality. Hence the drama before us may well be regarded the center of Goethe's whole living drama, and of this center in turn the genetic germ is the evolution of Mephistopheles into full activity, yet with the outlook upon his subordination. Thus the poem embraces the universal process of man begetting the negative and then overcoming it in himself and in the world. (Whoever wishes a fuller interpretative commentary, which carries out in detail the view of the present author on *Faust*, is referred to his book already cited.)

CHAPTER SIXTH.

GOETHE ALONE AGAIN.

After the death of Schiller, which took place May 9, 1805, Goethe felt himself not merely alone in the world, but severed in twain. He had become so intergrown with his friend that they formed, if not one body, one spirit in which each participated through his own independent Genius. In a letter to Zelter he writes not long afterwards: "I thought to lose myself and now I lose a friend, and in him the half of my existence." Quite undone he looks out upon the future: "Properly I ought to make a new start in life, but there is no way to that in my years. So I take every day immediately as it comes, and do what is at hand without thinking of the consequences." Still let it be noted that Goethe himself is not dead, though for the present stunned quite into non-entity. Give him time, and he will "make the new start," whereof the record will come hereafter. But now his pen is paralyzed, as he indicates in a later account: "My diary of that time is a blank; its white leaves tell my blank condition. Other accounts show that I simply let my business conduct me instead of my con-

ducting it." Thus he bespeaks his prostration in several remaining documents.

It is evident that Goethe regards the passing of Schiller as the turn of an Epoch in his life. Doubtless he is aware, as he looks back, that the most fruitful season of his Genius has come and gone; he knows that he cannot find another such partner in creative power. The Goethe-Schiller Decennium is now rounded out to fulfilment, and stands before us in definite outline as the central Epoch of a great poetical career. From the first meeting of the two poets in 1794, till Schiller's evanishment, there is the unique prolific association of Genius whereby each shares in the other's gift while keeping and realizing his own. Many years later Goethe tells of his personal bereavement, which "deprived me of all intimate participation, I missed the spiritual push to effort, and the furtherance through a friendly rivalry."

Accordingly, we are now to behold Goethe entering upon a new Epoch of his life, which shows him solitary again, but under conditions very different from those which isolated and estranged him on his return from Italy. He has risen to be the great Goethe with an ever-increasing recognition in his own country and in the rest of Europe. Visitors begin to throng Weimar, eager to catch a word

from him or even a glimpse of him on the street. Particularly after the publication of his *First Part of Faust* in 1808, he is getting to be acclaimed a world-poet of the first magnitude, brothered with Homer and Shakespeare. To be sure, there was then decided opposition to the man and his work, and it still is not silent. But his place not only in German but in universal Literature can no longer be gainsaid.

The first effect of Schiller's death upon Goethe was a kind of stupor which lamed his production. Then followed during the next year the overwhelming calamity of Napoleon's invasion of Germany. Troops were marching everywhere, preparing for the conflict; unspeakable anxiety oppressed all the people and paralyzed the mental activity of everybody except the philosopher Hegel, who is said to have completed his "Phenomenology" to the thunders of the cannon at the battle of Jena. French soldiery poured into Weimar, plundering, burning, murdering. They entered Goethe's house with insolent demands; two drunken marauders are said to have pushed into his private room, where they were met by Christiane with heroic display of courage which saved the life of the poet. At last a guard was sent for his protection, but officers were billeted on his house-

hold sometimes in large numbers, till the war-cloud rolled away. Thus a great national crisis crushed in upon the poet not long after the loss of his other Self in Schiller. At last peace came, and a new activity began to announce itself in his life.

The strange psychologic fact now rises to the surface that Goethe, being deprived of the communion with Schiller, falls back into a youthful resurgence of his fundamental passion. When his Genius is no longer stirred in its creative sources by another corresponding Genius, there wells forth from the depths his former love of woman as the controlling power over his destiny. Young Phileros wakes up slowly, and begins to throb again with fresh ardor in the breast of the graying man. The old age of Goethe is arriving by tale of years, but with it blooms afresh the youth of his love. During the last Decennium the presence of Schiller seems to have satisfied his heart's deepest longing, and to have diverted his genetic energy into poetic creation; but now that stimulating propulsion of his Genius is gone, and he returns to his primal endowment of nature, to his original Self as revealed in his early career.

Thus in the first years of the present Epoch Goethe's Muse is almost benumbed into speechlessness by two overwhelming, truly

cataclysmic occurrences, one a personal and the other a national, the decease of Schiller and the submergence of Fatherland. But listen! in the last months of 1807 the poet was staying in Jena and there in the house of the bookseller, Frommann, he looked upon Minna Herzlieb, a beautiful maiden of nineteen, and at once Phileros, the lover of Love starts to rise if not from his grave, at least from his long quiescence of almost twenty years in furious resurrection of his soul's ultimate passion, which will equal the volcanic outbursts of his youth. Then follows the needful utterance in literature for his life's rescue from his own tiger-fierce emotions, since of course obstacles mounted up before him insuperable—whereof we shall say somewhat hereafter. But just now we must watch Phileros enacting a new scene in the fatal sweep of his life-tragedy.

I.

Goethe's Legal Marriage.

The battle of Jena took place October 14, 1806, the victorious French soon overflowed Weimar, when Christiane is said to have saved the life of the poet by throwing herself between him and two marauders who brand-

ished drawn daggers. Her deed has been variously reported, but the chief result of it is world-famous: Goethe, after eighteen years' hesitation, resolves to marry legally the maker of his home and the mother of his son, now in his seventeenth year. The ceremony is to be performed by the Court's chief clergyman, to whom Goethe sends by letter (October 17) the following request: "During these days and nights an old purpose of mine has come to maturity. I wish to recognize fully and legally as mine the little female friend who has done so much for me, and also has lived through these hours of trial with me. Tell me what steps are necessary, as soon as possible, etc." Whereupon the marriage takes place two days afterwards in presence of the son, August Goethe, who is said to have been "enormously delighted" at what seemed his new legitimate birth. Observe that he was already an adolescent who must have been completely aware of his anomalous station in the social world. In hundreds of ways that had been brought home to the sensitive youth and was already having its effect upon his conduct and character.

Goethe says that it was "an old purpose," which, however, had been continually deferred until now when the consequences of his deed could not be escaped. But what a tre-

mendous pressure it took to bring him at last to his final action? His many warnings have passed over him, usually with the one result, which produces a fresh confession and expiation in some written book. Severe illness had brought him to death's portal, calling forth another crop of good resolutions, which were forgotten on the return of health. Thus his "old purpose" was merely getting older, till the roar of artillery and the tramp of inrushing triumphant soldiery must have reminded him of the Last Judgment just at hand. Hence "during these days and nights" his work of conscience did actually mature and get itself done. But it took all the cannonading of the Jena battle nearby, and the seeming overturn of a world along with the presence of Europe's mighty conqueror in person to drive him "to recognize as mine the little female friend (*Freundinn*) who had done so much for me,"—nothing less than saved his life at the risk of her own. But give him credit that in the distant gunnery he heard the very crack of Doom, and hastened to make peace with that institutional order which he had so long and so defiantly violated.

Now tell us, ye Powers, will he escape the penalty of his deed? Many years have yet to run ere we behold the full round of this life-tragedy. But certain significant points

may already be observed. Christiane, who could give little if any response to his spiritual appeal, is distinctly going backward; she shows her retrogression in shape and conduct, having become fat, beery and gross; she is excessively given to dancing and its wild excitement, and often she keeps questionable company. She, too, has grown defiant, especially of public rumor, which even scandalizes her name. Not all is to be believed which the venomous tongues of Weimar's high-toned women tattled about her character. Still enough proof is documented that she surrendered herself to an excessive indulgence of her lower nature. There are indications that her son was ashamed of her, thus receiving a new humiliation in addition to that of his birth. Goethe, while adhering strictly to the forms of married life, gave her up and let her run quite at will, while he sought other company. Certainly that household was decadent, and moving toward its fate.

Hence it comes that Phileros in his home was desolate, and he, lonely and loveless, was longing for a heart's response. He took his own freedom and gave Christiane her freedom. Though verging toward sixty, he feels his youth unfettered again and starts on a new phase of his career. He is no longer re-

strained by the presence of Schiller or kept creatively active by the latter's Genius. And practically he finds in his family no adequate answer to his emotional nature still intense and throbbing for recognition. So much we shall hear him confessing indirectly after his fashion.

But how about the son in whom the tragedy centers? Already we read ominous words about his resignation to his fatal inheritance coming from both his father and his mother. Does he not know what it is, and how it pursues him everywhere? Alas! his fame is co-extensive with that of his great parent; he cannot get beyond its periphery of nagging gossip. Let him but pay a visit to his grandmother at Frankfort; as he walks down the street with the old lady, what a buzzing susurrus whispers along its whole length! When he reaches the right age he is sent to the University of Heidelberg, but with small result. Then he goes to Jena to study finance, but his fate follows him; he could hear the students there making dubious jokes about his mother, and not sparing "old Goethe," whose passion for Minna Herzlieb of that town was not hid under a bushel. The young man shunned society as much as possible, and brooded in solitude, so that he was nicknamed the monk; human association

became a curse to him, and he fled to the country at the age of twenty-one “to study agriculture at Capellendorf.” Still this occupation did not detain him long. In the great upheaval of Germany against Napoleon he volunteered as a soldier—a very creditable act which, however, cost his father untold anxiety. Suffice it to say he did not go to war, but he did get into trouble with a military officer, and a duel was in prospect when the anxious parent again interfered through a mediator. The cause of this affair of honor has remained obscure, or perchance suppressed, but every reader can imagine what taunts would hum around the wretched victim in the barrack or at the mess. So the son lived his tragedy.

And the father also did not escape the social penalty of the same sort. This is strikingly indicated in a letter which he wrote in 1792, while on a visit to Frankfort. He speaks of a certain pleasure in seeing the old friends of his native city; then comes the bitter dose of wormwood: “it is impossible for me not to feel disgust in all the social circles here, for wherever two or three are gathered together, you hear the song now four years old strummed *pro* and *contra*, and not even with variations, but the crude theme itself.” In 1788 (four years since) we recollect that

Goethe met Christiane in the Weimar Park. Such, then, is the music which plays around the poet wherever he may go, and will accompany him during his whole life, yea for all time. But the pathos of the situation is that his innocent offspring has to listen to that "same old song" of disgraceful birth. And yet this buzzing environment of everlasting tattle is not all or the worst, as we see by the same letter, in which Goethe growls at his printed deed: "Unfortunately the newspapers go everywhere; these are now my most dangerous foes." Publicity is verily the devil's arch-enemy, or rather he turns it into an instrument of his subtlest torture. So it comes that the low transitory whisper is endowed with a voice of thunder, which rolls through space and over time, and moreover becomes the persistent undertone of Goethe's life-poem.

What is the solution of his son's desperate problem? What can he, now a grown man, do with himself in this environment of Hell, which broils him in torment and damns him guiltless? One monition only can be given him: "flee, much-enduring youth, get away from Weimar, from Germany, perchance from Europe, break out of the doomful shadow of thy parent's name, begin thy life anew, unknown it may be, but still thine.

Here thou canst not compel thy lot, too weak
art thou for that, so flee if thou wouldest avoid
thy tragedy now surely approaching."

The father is in the same fatal atmosphere, and doubtless feels a deeper conflict on account of his deed of guilt, source of all these woes to himself and to his own. But he is the Fate-compeller, and the tragic counter-stroke though it makes him wince in agony cannot undo him. Let us note him again at his task of self-expression, which has in his case the power of loosening the grip of destiny.

II.

Pandora.

This drama is again one of Goethe's mighty fragments, and shows the poet himself as a fragment when composing it during the present Epoch. It reaches backward and forward, mirroring past and future, in the stress of the present; classic in form, it is highly symbolic and often enigmatic in content. Europe, civilization, the new incoming economic order play into it, requiring the farthest outstretch of our thought; yet it also reveals the intense personal experience of the poet, his immediate emotional overflow. To us it hints a grand transition, giving the

first throbs of the coming third period of his total career; he begins to return upon himself in order to renew and restore his Genius. Still his face is set frontward. He goes back to his Titanism for the purpose of reconstructing it and himself; also that wonderful youth of his he will repossess and graft upon his aged trunk.

The original name of the drama was *Pandora's Return*, in which designation is suggested the deepest fact of the poem as well as of the poet during this Epoch. She, the all-gifted woman of his youthful love, is coming back, yea has already come back, if the truth be spoken out; he has felt her presence rejuveninating him with his early elemental passion which she has stirred from its primal sources. Hardly has he had any such compelling experience of heart for two decades, not since he fatefully met Christiane in the Weimar Park. Note with care that he has been gotten ready by the formative power of life's events, when across his path on the moment flits the maidenly shape, just the right one out of hundreds and hundreds. Thus the senescent poet is dipped into the fountain of youth and suddenly becomes creative, rising from his baptism with the conception born of his living experience. Pandora has returned. Great is his delight at the divine appearance

of woman's love which the Muse bids him celebrate at once in song.

Unfortunately Pandora is not present in this fragment which lies between her first coming and her return. Thus she is both a memory and a hope—a glory that is past and a beauty that is to be. Between these two ideals the poem floats airily and iridescently like a sky-borne balloon, giving rise to much wondering and conjecture. Many an interpretation of the work is longer than the work itself which sends indeed rapid lightning flashes in all directions, from the old Greek Mythus down to the present. The title itself is an oracle which runs double, indeed several meanings often glimmer around persons and incidents. The whole is not an allegory, though it has its allegoric spots; rather we may call it a phantasmagory, employing a term applied by the poet himself to his *Helena*, with which piece this *Pandora* is closely akin in poetic mood and form, as well as in its varied metrical scheme. It is kept mainly in antique measures, yet with inbreaking rhymes of love. Thus it belongs still to the poet's classic Period, into which, however, is pushing a new era. That twofoldness of his art, manifesting its Hellenic and Teutonic strains we yet find, but it now creates only a fragment, and this is the last of its kind, with

possibly one exception. Still the general meaning is plain enough, and winds through the whole poem: Goethe is swaying between his past and future, between youth and age; Pandora, the ideal of love belongs to his two Paradises, the one that has been and the one that is to be; though gone she is coming back. The present intermezzo looks behind and before, is charactered with hindsight and foresight as suggested in the names of Epimetheus and Prometheus; the reader goes up and down, teetering between senescence and juvenescence often in a poetical ecstasy. In this poem is a kind of bridge not only between its two unfinished portions, but between the middle and last Periods of the poet's own career.

The two Goethes, the old and the young, appear before us in the first two characters of the drama under the names Epimetheus and Phileros. The former looks back to his youth in a vein of pensive reminiscence, and soliloquizes over the time when "my heart beat joyously as Pandora came down to me from Olympus." But that time is past, still he, though advanced in years, awaits hopefully her return. Well, who is this young man coming upon him and chanting a rapturous song of love: "Nor rest nor repose can quiet my throes." Thus appears Phileros

(so named here) his youthful counterpart who presents a vivid image to him of his former passion for Pandora. Here we see the two Goethes, with a full generation between them, yet both one in love. Phileros, the lover of Love, has something of a career in this poem, but is not developed to his full promise; for his fruition we must follow him as a character through Goethe's whole life-poem in which he moves from beginning to end.

Such is the one thread of the present work. But there is interwoven in it a wholly different set of characters who are filled with an opposite tendency and belong to another physical as well as social world. This is the part of Prometheus here representing Productive Industry, with his retinue of smiths, shepherds, workmen. He stands for will-power in strong contrast with his brother Epimetheus, who is more the subjective, emotional brooding element, with a strain of art and philosophy. The realist and idealist, the active and the contemplative souls are the antithetic brothers, the practical and the theoretical, even the material and the spiritual. Two Germanies we may likewise deem them, so that Goethe here shows his prophetic glance; Epimetheus is the Germany of the poet's time, with its creative philosophy, music, poetry

and lack of will; Prometheus is the Germany of to-day with its marvelous industrial development, its materialism, militarism, its superabundance of will but a corresponding lack of the creatively ideal spirit. Thus Goethe throws a foreshadow of his nation's future, faint indeed but at present very suggestive.

Again the poet tries his hand at the ever-fascinating old Greek Mythus of Prometheus which he had already tackled far back in his Frankfort Epoch of Titanism. Prometheus was then portrayed as the God-defiant Titan; in fact the poet seems to have composed at Frankfort two distinct fragments, a dramatic and a lyric on the subject of Prometheus, though some hold that the two are really one and the same work. But much later, in his Goethe-Schiller Epoch, he takes again a Promethean spell, and will write in the wake of ancient Aeschylus, a Prometheus Unbound but without any finished result. Shelley seized the same theme, but in spite of his overflowing poetry has he really unbound Prometheus? Can the chained Titan be unbound in Europe? Doubtful; at any rate its greatest recent poet, after testing his strength gave up the attempt. But now in *Pandora*, a decade or more afterwards, Go-

the again picks up Prometheus and reconstructs the fable from a totally different point of view, which, however, is hinted in the old account. But once more his work remains a torso; he evidently breaks down at the part of Prometheus; moreover his classicism is seen to be waning, if not passing through its final stage; after a marvelous creative Period it is being transcended by the ever-evolving poet. So we feel like affectionately saying: Good-bye, Prometheus, and thy ancient Hellenic world.

But there is a vital part of this drama which is not going to vanish. Beautiful Pandora may not return to her old Epimetheus in her antique shape; the poet can no longer conjure her back. Yet her living, new-born form of youth cannot be kept away; behold, here she comes in all the freshness of young life and beauty.

III.

Love's New Epiphany.

The return of Pandora into Goethe's life is now to be set forth, not symbolically and enigmatically through an old Mythus, but as an actual living presence appearing in person to his physical eye-sight. Let us, accord-

ingly, scan with some precision the young lady who stands at such an important stage in Goethe's evolution, quite as important is it as the Italian Journey. For she possesses the charm to whelm the poet, now touching the fringe of his gray years, into the fountain of youthful love in which he will make a new turn, rising from his deep tribulation over the loss of his friend, over the political misery of his land, over the hapless decadence of his own household (which Schiller had already designated as wretched), and unfolding into a supreme recovery and renewal of his Genius. The epiphany of Minna Herzlieb is an engrossing event in Goethe's life-poem, she becomes the pivotal personality through whom he wheels about not simply to a new Epoch, but to a new Period of his total career. For the naive simple-hearted maiden of nineteen possessed the magic power, quite unknown to herself, of waking up Phileros, the lover of Love, from his long somnolence if not deep sleep.

She was the adopted daughter of the bookseller Frommann, with whom Goethe dealt in Jena, and in whose house he was a visitor. Thus she had come under his eye as a child, and had attracted him, as he long afterwards confessed in a letter to Zelter, but only as a charming little girl. But behold! the little

girl has grown up, yea has flowered out into the first and fairest bloom of woman's most entrancing season. The poet, paying a call at the Frommann household, witnesses the divine vision; the call is repeated as Goethe is somewhat solitary, and Minna, at the time, it seems, is sole housekeeper, the foster-mother being absent from town on a trip, as the record tells us. Thus the Goddess Opportunity has deftly laid the train when follows the explosion. The poet in a sonnet addressed to her, compares himself to a maker of fireworks, who with all his careful fore-thought and skill finds that "the power of the element is stronger than himself, and before he knows it he is blown to pieces up in the air." Thus Goethe again experiences one of his mightiest elemental loves, which becomes the more intense as it is impossible of fruition, like that of Lotte Buff, for he has now a legal wife, and the young lady is already engaged. Hence rises a strain which will wind itself through all the work of his old-age, the sad antiphony to Love's joyous renewal, namely Love's renunciation.

It is acknowledged that Minna Herzlieb possessed no great amount of bodily or intellectual strength; she was a slender, spare-waisted, dreamy maiden, truly an innocent flower-nature. A keen-eyed woman gives this

description of her: "The loveliest of all virginal roses, with childlike features, with large dark eyes. The black braids fell sparkling down her back, her pleasing countenance was enlivened by the warm fresh glance of color; her form was slender and supple. Of happiest proportion, and exceedingly graceful in every motion." Thus Goethe now beheld her, doubtless at the most beautiful moment of her life when she was just putting forth the finest bloom of young maidenhood. Long he had watched her in the bud with a paternal interest, but sudden and overwhelming is the surprise of love at her flowering, so that he sings: "In the train of the spring-tide she steps forth glorious—I recognize her, I seize her, and am undone."

But now the other side comes up—did she requite his love—and what was her fate thus to be passioned of a Genius, loved as it were by a demigod? She has left a slight record of her feeling: "indescribably happy and yet so full of woe in his presence." She confesses that when she went back to her own room after hearing "the golden words flow from his mouth for an evening" she broke down in tears, as she thought "what the man could make of himself." There is little doubt that the simple but deeply receptive girl's heart heard the most exquisite passes of Goethe's

Genius, for he could not help doing his best under that all-summoning spell of love. She might not understand it wholly, but she certainly felt the supernal treasures of the Muse to be pouring down at her feet. And yet we hear from certain forlorn reporters that Minna Herzlieb never knew of Goethe's love, still less did she requite it. Impossible for any mortal woman in such a presence with a young heart like hers; besides, such a statement contradicts what her own words imply, and what Goethe more than implies in his sonnets, which pertain mainly to her and himself. Then her reflection in certain of his characters hints the truth of the situation.

But next we ask with some anxiety, what became of the sweet little creature who had quite unawares called down upon herself such an overpowering Olympian passion. It seems that her first early betrothal was broken off, and the following spring (1808) she quit Jena and remained absent for years. Why was she hurried away from her home in that fashion? Fourteen years later when she was thirty-three, she married a Jena Professor, but the union was not happy, and a separation soon took place. Alas, the fateful woman in whose heart was throned the love of a demi-god—how can she ever again give that heart to a common mortal! In fact

her whole being, reason itself became involved in this overturn of her destiny, and we read that her mind passed into an eclipse which hung over the rest of her long life, she surviving till 1865. Thus we have to see in her a tragic lot, and we are reminded of Clara in *Egmont* who, already promised to an ordinary man, Brackenburg, breaks away from her engagement when she meets an heroic lover and becomes filled with his demonic spirit so that she dies the death of the heroine. Thus Goethe has portrayed a woman obsessed with an all-controlling love for her ideal man; but such power tender gentle Minna does not own, and hence she collapses within under the awful burden, recalling Otilia in *Elective Affinities* for whose portrait she furnished important features to the poet.

But what about Goethe himself in this desperate wrestle with passion? He too was caught in the resistless maelstrom, and perhaps was more intensely affected than the woman as there was more of him to be affected. Again and again he has left on record hints of his prolonged agony, he could not recover from the continued upbursts of his deepest nature, he calls it an ever-bleeding wound "which will not let itself be healed, a heart which is afraid to get well." Such are the passionate words which he sets down

in his diary, as if he too were a lost soul in the Inferno of love. Yet he is not, he cannot perish in this way, for see him again seize hold of that Fate-defying weapon of his, namely his pen, out of which begin to flow all his sorrows with confession, expiation, then final relief and recovery. But poor little Minna, the dear soft-hearted creature, she wields no such implement of salvation, and so she sinks under the soul-cleaving, life-long tragedy of her love.

But such was the length and the strength of this conflict in the poet, its oft-recurring and heart-wrenching paroxysms, that it will require not merely a single book but quite a library for its exorcism through expression. More than one big dose of his quill-craft he will have to administer to himself, for the awful convulsions of his passion keep returning, his wounded heart “is afraid to get well,” and keeps bleeding afresh. The result is that a small Herzlieb literature springs up around this node of his career. No other woman of his many loves ever compelled him to write so many tomes before he could get rid of her haunting presence. Four works directly belong here: (1) the *Sonnets*, the least of all, yet the significant starting-point; (2) *Pandora*, a drama already considered; (3) *Elective Affinities*, a novel to be noted later; (4)

Goethe's Autobiography, which is the axial work of a wholly new Period in the poet's life. This is what we are next to consider.

Here, then, ends the present Epoch, and with it the entire Second Period, which we may remember, took its start when Goethe set out for Italy. But now he sets out for his last home, by way of returning to his first.

Part Third

Goethe the Old Man

(1809–1832.)

Evidently we are now to behold Goethe entering upon his Third Period, the final one of his life, and having its own distinctive character. As indicated by the given dates, it continued some twenty-three years, thus being of quite the same duration as his previous Second Period, of which it is both the antithesis and the fulfilment. Its first beginning, however, cannot well be dated to the precise year, if we take into account all the

precedent signs of its gradual growth. There is no single sudden act to emphasize its starting-point, like Goethe's departure for Italy, of which the exact time is known, and which gives the commencement of the Second Period. We might take Goethe's meeting with Minna Herzlieb in the fall of 1807 as the germ of this new transition; but that germ had to develop in order to show what it truly meant. In *Pandora* it was certainly present, although still infolded in the peculiar vesture of the Second Period of the poet, namely his classicism. But with the completion of *Elective Affinities* in 1809, the old wrappage is thrown off and the evolution is complete. Moreover, other works were then ripening which indicated the new pivotal transition to the future, the transition from Goethe's middle life to his ageing time. And we hold that this slow inner development accords with the man's years; the birth of the infant is a sudden jet lightwards, and may be registered to the hour, but the birth of old-age is hesitating and gradual, often eddying backwards in youthful resurgences, yet on the whole driving tardily forwards to the close. And here we may dare whisper a theory of ours: the entire career of Goethe, especially this last part, is best understood and realized by an old man who also can write from his own liv-

ing experience and sympathy the poet's completed biography. We think that we have noticed in younger authors an impatience, especially with this Third Period, which in general has its own literary style, poetic form, and spiritual world-view, all of which are often contemptuously ascribed to Goethe's senility. It is our intention, however, to grasp it and to correlate it as the necessary integrating arc of his all-rounded cycle of achievement. In his sixtieth year he is now, and will keep at work till his eighty-third, finishing in deed and writ the last great song of his life-poem.

I. In what way does this Third Period differ from the foregoing Second Period? First of all we may note that his devotion to the classical world and its forms comes to an end, if we except rare fitful relapses. Few if any elegies, epigrams, epics after the old Hellenic pattern; the antique dramatic style drops out of his literary creation with one or two spasmodic regurgitations. He evidently feels that he has delivered his classical message; wonderful indeed has been his work herein but it is done; through literature he has recreated that ancient art-world, and transfused it into modern speech and life. Thus we say that he has reproduced and eternized in his poetry the old Mediterranean

civilization on the side of its culture of beauty, and made it a possible part of every man's education today. To that civilization we have to go back, if we would know our own and ourselves; if indeed we would become integral as our race has been. Goethe, therefore, is a great mediator of our present with our past, universalizing us by adding to our fragmentary self what it lacks of wholeness.

Such is the task of the foregoing Second Period in which we have pointed out the two interweaving strands under various names—Classic and Romantic, Greek and Teutonic, Southern and Northern. Hence was often noticed the twofoldness of that Period, which runs through it from beginning to end, culminating in the two poets, Goethe and Schiller, each of whom has in himself the same dualism. But in the present Third Period this peculiar separative character ceases; there is in it a deep pervasive unity of form and spirit; in fact we note a significant unity in its one primordial passion, that of love, which is to be more fully considered later as its pivotal phenomenon.

II. A change in Goethe's style has often been remarked as taking place during this time. He becomes the conscious symbolist, working rather from the side of the inner meaning than the immediate vision of the

poetic object. We may observe such a tendency already in the Second Period. His classic figures he often turns into symbols or even allegories, as may be exemplified in *Pandora*, which tendency, however, culminates in the *Second Part of Faust*. Indeed he passed into his more pronounced symbolism by way of his classicism. The Greek Mythus he no longer seized directly in its own right but as the bearer of some thought. Iphigenia is still a concrete individual, even if she suggests a higher meaning; but Epimenides is an abstract conception wearing a Greek mask. In the last strain of the Faust drama he says: "Every thing transitory is only a *likeness* (*Gleichniss*)," an image or symbol of what is not transitory. This expresses, however, not simply a literary method, but his deepest conviction, the world-view of his later years. Thus he speaks to Eckermann in 1824: "I have regarded all my doing and achieving as only symbolical," filled with a content beyond its immediate appearance. Such is now his consciousness, the principle of his living as well as of his writing. Long before (in 1797) he had designated the poet as he who "calls the particular thing to its universal consecration," that is, who symbolizes the whole finite world. On reading again his *Wilhelm Meister's App-*

prenticeship in his old-age he expresses his delight and comfort of soul "to find that the whole novel is symbolical," which he evidently did not think of when he wrote it; he also remarks that "behind the projected characters there lies hidden something higher, something universal." Nay, he affirms that even "in the trivialties of *Meister* lurks an upper meaning." Such is the symbolic Goethe of this Third Period looking back at the classic-romantic Goethe of the Second Period. It is an orderly evolution: the old man casts his view beyond, with the tendency to see the supersensible in the sensible, the eternal in the changeful, the pure idea in the real.

Such a way of poetizing may seem to contradict the view of him which we have so often emphasized: Goethe can only produce in his art what he has personally experienced. Not a few critics declare that now he creates only abstractions, unrealities, phantasms, that the symbolic Goethe is the unpoetic Goethe. But to the mind which wishes to grasp and sympathetically appropriate the whole poet in all his stages of evolution the present Period with its evolved consciousness is a necessary phase, for it is something deeply experienced, we believe more deeply than ever before, even if different from what has

preceded it. Conscious symbolism becomes increasingly Goethe's new experience, being at last a clearer vision of the eternal entities which appear in the world of sensation and particularity.

From this point of view we may glance at his three Periods in their development. As the young poet he seizes the immediate fact or event, and portrays it in all its sensuous fullness; still there is in his work unconsciously the secret pulsation of a higher energy which we feel for instance in his *Götz*. Hence this may well be deemed his time of unconscious symbolism. In his Second Period he wins the classic form and so possesses two methods, two symbols, we may call them, in his poetic procedure. These come together in his Third Period whose characteristic is that of conscious symbolism which bespeaks the deepest experience of the old poet when he delights to behold the Beyond in the Now, the infinite gleaming through the finite manifestation, the idea in the reality. So it comes that when he looks back at his early productions, he finds secretly ensconced in them the symbol, to his great happiness.

Now with this deepened world-view arises a corresponding change of his poetic process. He once declared that the right way of poetizing is to take the real and to idealize

that in its own form. This he said was one of Merck's suggestive lessons. The other and wrong method was to grasp something imaginative or ideal beforehand and then to realize that. But the fact now pushes to the front that Goethe in this Third Period begins to follow the very maxim so strongly forbidden and denounced in his First Period; that is, we often see him start with the idea or even the abstraction, and proceed to give to it a poetic shape. What else is his Homunculus and other figures in the *Second Part of Faust*, which have so often roused the wrath of the narrow-souled critic who seems unable to see and sympathize with the total poet in all the stages of his evolution? The same change we may note in Shakespeare; Caliban is not a real creature but an imagined thing or idea endowed with its own shape by the poet who showed this tendency also in his ageing time, since his *Tempest* was probably his last drama. In fact we can catch hints of a similar poetic evolution in ancient Homer, if we contrast in this regard the Iliad with the Odyssey, for in the latter we find the figure of Polyphemus which is certainly not a real man but a product of the imagination put into its own shape.

Thus we follow Goethe truly universalizing himself in the full cycle of his life-poem,

as he reaches out to art-forms which were at first beyond him, and which he, therefore, abjured even with contempt. Still he is supremely the evolving spirit, indeed, we may call him the very Genius of evolution, especially in its literary expression, which he manifested not only in writing but in living.

III. But the supreme world-surprising fact of this Third Period is the return of the old man to the youthful intensity of his elemental passion, the rejuvenescence of love, really of the lover of Love. As this turn of his struck down to the bottom of his whole emotional nature, it had to report itself in writ, and thus we have here one of the most singular chapters in all literature. Phileros goes through a great new stage of man's discipline, that of having a young heart in an old body, and this young heart throbs and quakes with its juvenile intoxication till it threatens to shatter its senile frame work, both physical and mental. Such is the grand node which he now rounds in his life-experience and in his life-poem. Let us mark again that he, endowed with such an inner volcano, cannot help himself; the overflow from the deepest sources of his existence bursts up ere he can look about, and he finds himself struggling in the stormy ocean of his own heart. Not once but thrice in the course of

the present Period does this shock of passion recur with a vehemence which brings him to the verge of dissolution. Still he escapes through that wonderful instrument of his, which has left us the Goethe literature, whose message we are now considering, really the record of his way of salvation from the Furies of his own Nature, from the tragedy of his supreme gift, of his very Genius.

Undoubtedly Minna Herzlieb had the peculiar stroke of personality which whirled the senescent lover back to his primal starting-point, so that he re-lives his early days again, as we see in his Autobiography. Her love moved him creatively to reproduce his first young loves, which he narrates with so much fullness and zest. Here we reach down to the basic fact of the present Period: the return of a self-completing human career to its germinal commencement which thus circles to the full its last stage, and interlinks with the first. We see the old man now going back not only to review his youth but to renew and re-live it, thereby re-enacting afresh and so finishing his life-poem. The pivot of this ultimate return—we may say of this soul to itself—is that original elemental love which joins him with creation itself.

So it comes that Phileros again rises to the

front and resumes his place as the central, all-compelling character of the poet's work. He is rejuvenated and thus endowed with a fresh power of man's love for woman, which is so deeply coupled with the creative instinct of his Genius. A new-born Phileros, then, we behold, both in action and in poetic production; another palingenesis it may be deemed, bringing forth the soul again with renewed generation; to employ Goethe's own suggestive word about himself, it is his third "puberty," no longer his second, which he has outgrown, and of course not his first, to which, however, he goes back, and which through writing he reproduces in its fervid energy. Passion is here, but with the mighty deep-flowing momentum of years, not so much with the bubbling buoyancy or with the tempestuous outburst of youth.

Already we have watched this profoundest strain of Goethe's Genius, and traced it from his boyhood as it weaves through all his activity, unwritten as well as written, till the present Period when it revolves around to where it begins, yet carrying with it the full experience which he has won up to date. But mark the difference between then and now: then in his First Period he was pushing forward unconsciously, instinctively in soul-wrenching throes to his youthful production,

such as *Werther*; but now he turns backward to his life's first fountain, as if to re-bear himself through his own creative act of Genius, to re-enact his birth by his art, thus originating his own origin and rounding his ideal cycle of being. Note once more, that love, the primordial creative power of the universe, is what is driving him to this act of his own re-creation, which is the grand elimacteric of his life as well as the final fulfilment of his poetic career.

In this Third Period, accordingly, we must see Goethe transcending his Second Period so that the latter becomes a part or constituent of his total self, as well as a part or constituent of human culture. For that is just his power: he elevates his own individual experience to be that of man, yea of the universe; he makes it the spiritual heritage of himself and therewith of his race. Thus the Second Period with all its marvelous productivity though transcended is not lost, rather it is preserved ideally forever. Still in order to be the completely realized man, he must rise out of it, and go back to his first creative time and re-make his own native Genius as the made or given, thus re-creating, so to speak, his own very creation.

IV. Still higher must we carry the thought of this Third Period as the completion and

fulfilment of the poet's creative selfhood, which thus brings down into humanity the process of the All-Self reflected in the life of an individual. Moreover this individual, being the supreme poetic Genius adumbrates not only in his life but in his writ the Creator himself from whom he delivers a message unto mankind. Not merely the single composition, but all of his works taken together form a revelation of the supernal process of the universe, which therefore must seal its last and highest impress upon his life-poem.

Hence it comes that this returning point with its sweep backward is the most important node of a full human personality, being that portion which completes it according to the perfect supernal vision, and leaves it not a pitiful torn fragment of a life. It is that which rounds out and fully finishes the living activity of the mortal, making it even in its brief span of time the image or type of the Universal Self, or rather of the very Self of the Universe. Thus, the poet's earthly career becomes the imprint of the Divine Mind, and his writ is transfigured into a transcript of God.

Here we also reach down to the germinal fact (already noted) that Goethe became universally symbolic in this Third Period,

which indeed rounds out his life into a symbol of the All. Thus he symbolizes whatever he sees and does, for he has himself turned to a symbol not only incarnate but insouled of the Highest. Such is the import of this Third Period: his life has enacted the symbol, his poetry has written the symbol, his very consciousness has become the symbol of the all-conscious Self bearing the seal of its sovereign process. No wonder he declares to Eckermann in old-age: that he looks back on everything achieved by himself "as symbolical."

And yet further we must carry out this return of Goethe during the present Third Period. There is strikingly manifested in him the psychical return, which shows his innermost original Self going back and regarding itself under many forms, and in these realizing itself as eternally objective and present, as immortal. For in some way we have to account for the immortality of Goethe, wherein his Self through his accomplishment partook of the Eternal Self in its deathless process. Thus his life in its complete cycle may be deemed a Theophany, the appearance of God in the finite individual, whose writ with its special inspiration is a kind of new Scripture of which the supreme function is mediatorial like all Greatest Literature, mediating

the limited, erring, discordant creature with the universal harmony of the whole Creation. Undoubtedly Goethe has the Negative, both in the deed and in the record, more of it perhaps than any other modern poet; still he shows the Negative overcome especially in this third Period. Mephistopheles defines himself "a part," and further "a part of the part," but even he is to be integrated with the great Totality and "work the Good," though willing the Bad. So we catch the poet of Faust far back making the Devil prophesy his own undoing, which in fact is perpetually going on.

Thus Goethe's biography may be taken as revealing the principle and the process of Universal Biography, of which it is the most typical instance, or the largest, most comprehensive symbol yet realized in the life of an individual man.

V. In what work of Goethe is the present Period most distinctively represented? Our judgment speaks for the book which we shall call his Autobiography (*Wahrheit und Dichtung*), best known in English translation under the name of Truth and Fiction (or Poetry). Significant is the double title indicating Goethe's present view of his life and art as symbolic; really the two words might be rendered "Fact and Symbol," or the literal

events of his time and their higher meaning. Thus the name of the book already hints the general artistic character of the Third Period.

Moreover, the composition of this work will be continued through the rest of the poet's life, thus overarching the whole of the Third Period, from beginning to end. The last portion of the Autobiography was finished in 1831, some months before his death. The starting-point is declared by Riemer to have been August 28, 1808, the poet's birthday when he was fifty-nine years old. But there is no doubt that the subject before that date had been simmering in his mind, till it crystallized to a definite plan and purpose. Naturally we ask what was the deepest impulse which drove him to seize his pen and to give such a long account of his early days. His narrative includes many matters of many sorts, often heterogeneous, even if connected historically with his town, his home, and himself. Moreover its portions are written with varying degrees of literary power and of personal interest.

Now amid such a diversified mass there is one strand in which we feel the poet's heart-throb more directly and intensely than in any other: it is the record of his early loves varying from Gretchen to Lili. When the latter

affair winds up, the entire work of twenty Books is brought to a conclusion. To be sure, the whole remains again a fragment by the great torso-maker of himself who has strewn so many shining pieces of his soul along the pathway of his whole life. Goethe never took his Autobiography to Weimar, but stopped it abruptly at the close of his Frankfort Quadrennium, shrinking back seemingly from the appearance of Frau von Stein, once the Muse of his Genius, but now at the writing of this work, the Cassandra of his fatal deed.

Thus his Autobiography deals with the basic elemental passion of his existence at a time when this passion ran the gamut of many young ladies, not of the one old one. Already we have classed these amatory episodes under the name of novelettes (see preceding pp. 46-173), being parts of one great novel which is the book of his life. Many have been the works of the disguised Goethe, masking himself hitherto under different names in drama, novel, poem, but now it is the real Goethe telling on himself directly and refusing to hide himself any longer behind his various characters. Thus it is an act of living self-consciousness, in which his whole life dips back upon itself and therein becomes self-aware. His Autobiography shows his inner world turned outward into an actual

existence which is made permanent in writing; more technically, his subjective Ego gives its own self-creating form to its highest objective realization. Herein his life-poem enters its final sweep toward its goal of completion, and lets us glimpse the supreme function of Biography which is to reveal as ultimate in human consciousness the very form and movement of God-consciousness.

VI. Such, then, is the outer figuration as well as the inner purport of this Third Period of Goethe's life-poem, in which we seek to embrace its written and unwritten portions. As already indicated, it lasts some twenty-three years, a long stretch of life which also has its distinct epochal turns. Hence the question arises, upon what salient point do these Epochs revolve? And how many of them? And what is their common ground of unity?

Now comes to light the fact that during this Period occur three grand resurgences of love in the soul of the ageing Goethe, including the one already described. Thrice the senescent poet sweeps back to his youth in an overflow of his elemental passion which wells up into a wonderful rejuvenescence. This is accompanied by a corresponding renewal of creative energy which leaps forth in fresh poetic production. Thrice he gets old and

drooping, senile and impotent; thrice at the vision of youthful beauty he grows young, buoyant, creative, with a fresh radiant emanation from his heart's new sunrise. Thus his Genius seems re-born over and over again, reckless of frosting Time, through the ever-renewing might of love, which for him is the primordial regenerative power of Nature.

Woman's love, then, recreates the poet, and becomes the pivot of his epochal returns to youthful passion and its productivity. Accordingly we shall name the three Epochs of the present Period after the three women who possessed the unique personal gift of rousing through their love Goethe's ageing Genius to a thrice-repeated youth and poetic renascence. Their names, made immortal by a poet's glance, run as follows: I. Minna Herzlieb; II. Marianne Willemer; III. Ulrike Von Lèvetzow.

*CHAPTER SEVENTH.**MINNA HERZLIEB.*

It was Minna Herzlieb, then, who made Goethe autographic, driving him through a real love to remember and to recount the loves of his youth. She is verily the axis upon which he turns about to his starting-point, thus periodizing the last stage of his life. To be sure he was ready, the years had to prepare him for his new node of existence, his own Self must evolve to the point where its bent was to look back upon its past. Longevity is naturally reminiscent. But just at such a conjuncture appeared Minna Herzlieb, and in his heart made him young again, causing him not only to recall but to renew its fiercest youthful throbs at the sight of the entrancing maiden. Thus she determines the chief direction of his looking backwards, in fact she unconsciously dictates to him just that upon which he is to focus his soul and his pen.

Moreover he will no longer veil his experiences behind other names than his own, but will tell on himself openly; so he drops

the disguises which he has put on in drama, novel, lyric, and unashamed recounts the secret love-life of Phileros from its beginning. Thus he unmasks his heart, has to do so, since he now recognizes himself as universal lover, in whose career any particular love is but a transitory manifestation. This latter he can disguise in some special character and has done so hitherto; here, however, in his Autobiography he must make his confession not partial but absolute. Hence we see him aligning, as far as his work goes, all his loves, each of which has its literature, in one complete revelation which reaches down to the deepest fountain of his Genius, and which can no longer masquerade in any alien form, but must utter his own self in its native reality.

Minna Herzlieb, however, rouses in the poet not only a reminiscence of his former love, but she is also an immediate presence here and now, which starts him to creation in her own right. Hence the direct work which she inspires on the spot is the *Elective Affinities*. But that is not all: she gives to poet the key-note of this whole Third Period, and will, so to speak, reproduce her own essential part in two later shapes of women, each of whom will be also epochal. Thus she is a prelude of the future as well as a rem-

iniscence of the past; also she is the fountain of the present in the poet's activity.

Her Epoch lasts some six or seven years, in fact till it inpinges upon that of Marianne Willemer in 1814-15. According to his reporting friend Boisserée Goethe still in 1815 recalled his love for Ottilia (Minna) with much emotion, and told how unhappy she had made him (for he had to renounce her), till "at last his speech became wholly enigmatic, and full of strange premonitions." There is no doubt that his novel, *Elective Affinities* is the record of his present experience. He writes long afterward to Zelter: "There is not a stroke in the book which I have not lived, but it is not given as I lived it." Another declaration of his may be noted in this connection: "The use of my personal experiences has been everything to me; to invent out of nothing was never my business; I have always regarded the world as gifted with a greater genius than mine." With these indications of the author in our memory we may take a glance at his novel of Minna Herzlieb, though here again he throws a disguise over his love as not reminiscent of long-ago but as actually present in full tide of its energy.

I.

Elective Affinities.

Grip this book at its center and we shall find love ensconced there as the subtle demigurge who is undermining legal marriage and thus producing a tragic conflict. Was that Goethe's compelling experience when he wrote it? Would he have touched pen to paper unless he could have recorded himself at an ultimate crisis of his own destiny? Not unless we wish to discredit his hundredth assertion to that effect.

The theme is the elemental power of love—just the poet's primordial endowment of Nature—in its conflict with man's basic institution, the Family. Hence he takes the action of the four chemical elements as a symbol to prefigure the four human characters—two men and two women—who are in a state of decomposition and recombination. An original elemental force of Nature is at work in each of them sapping man's constituted order. Thus the novel reaches down to the fundamental collision which runs through the rise of all human society from the very beginning. And it is also the basic struggle of Goethe's own individual existence, as we have watched him in the unfolding of his life-poem, of

which it is the ever-recurring pulse-beat; it is the self renewing conflict of Phileros, the lover of Love from boyhood to old-age. Here, accordingly, lies before us one pivotal stage of his perennial battle.

Edward and Charlotte, the married pair, are getting along well enough humanly considered, when upon the scene is brought the unmarried pair, the Captain and Ottilia. Then the mutual disarrangement and rearrangement of the two pairs sets in, each person being driven by an unconscious unwilling force of Nature into a new and deeper affinity in violation of the established legal relation. Now in this furious cross-fire of passion, Charlotte the married wife and the unmarried Captain do not succumb to Nature's elemental stroke, though they feel it with no little energy. On the contrary Edward yields to the fateful impulse and is tragic, involving in his net of destiny Ottilia guiltless but crushed by the inner might of her conflict.

Goethe himself had done like Edward, had followed the immediate push of Nature, defying the institution and its law, and celebrating his disobedience in a reckless exuberance of fancy as we have noted in his *Roman Elegies*. But in the two decades since then, the institution has given him a memorable lesson, society has disowned his wife and branded

his son born out of wedlock with a stigma the more terrible because its object was guiltless. The poet's act of legitimating his outlawed family could not evitate its tragic doom. So he mirrors his own lot in advance by the fate of Edward.

Ottilia is portrayed also as the bearer of this elemental passion, but she resists it, being aware of its bent toward ethical violation. She manifests the native power of love in woman and excites its emotional response unconsciously wherever she comes in contact with men. Moreover the author connects her peculiar gift with certain hidden forces which are working far down in Nature's laboratory, and which seem to give her a mysterious control over the human heart. Goethe is here looking at himself and trying to account for the all-coercing influence which gentle, slight, weak-willed Minna Herzlieb propels through his whole being by her mere presence. The poet also forefeels and foretells her tragedy long before it occurred actually, in the fate of Ottilia. But his counterpart Edward he does not endow with his own fate-challenging gift of utterance, and hence the poor weakling sinks down under his own deed, or rather his lack of the man-making deed, at the close.

Both parents, Edward and Charlotte, ap-

pear not to have cared much for their offspring born inside the law but outside of love. Here Goethe must have thought of his own child born outside the law but inside of love. At any rate he makes the legitimate infant fated through the unlove of its begetters, even if it perishes by a seeming accident. Ottilia who has mothered it, tries to save it, but destiny is stronger, and at last grips both the babe and herself. But how about the poet's own deed whose outcome was the unlawful child—was it too fated? Already we have noted his grinding anxiety. In this connection we may cite the words of one of the novel's characters (Mittler) who evidently voices the confession of Goethe at this period: "Who ever attacks the marriage relation," is a man who assails "the beginning and culmination of civilized society." Verily our Goethe has become institutional through his bitter experience, and we may hear him say still further: "Whoever undermines this basis of all social order through his word, aye through his deed"—such a man has been just myself but is no longer: so we catch his indirect confession which the reader will feel like interjecting at this point in his narrative.

There is little doubt that Goethe in these spontaneous actions of Ottilia intended to

suggest what was that inborn power of hers which seemed to win every man who glanced into her face: maternal love. She looked it, acted it, created its atmosphere about her; thus she was endowed with the elemental nature of women as the primal source of humanity. Nor can we hesitate to think that Goethe therein transferred to her what he deemed the ultimate attraction in the character of Minna Herzlieb. We recollect that this same trait was doubtless the deepest link which held him so long to Frau Von Stein. And his own mother claimed for her maternity the chief crown of her existence. Moreover the poet along the same line transforms Ottilia into a sort of Madonna, suggesting the Divine Mother with her mediatorial power in the case of trouble and disease.

But for the poet himself there is one peculiar word which winds through the novel: renunciation. He is a Titanic lover again, going back to his Frankfort Epoch; yet he also knows that he must renounce. Not only his time of life, but his conviction in regard to the institution demands the subordination of his elemental passion. Because of its subject the book has often been denounced as immoral; but the deepest strain of its meaning is institutional, enforcing the lesson of violation through tragedy. Here again we

may read Goethe's confession at this node of his life-poem. He can still feel the volcanic upheaval of youthful love, but upon it falls the counter stroke of the old man's resignation.

This novel is the most thoroughly unified and most carefully constructed of all Goethe's larger works. Moreover it was written at a gush and is not the result of a ladder-like evolution of many years, such as are *Meister* and *Faust*. To compose it Goethe ran off to Jena and practically hid himself till it was done (in the summer of 1809). Such concentration shows his coercive need of utterance for relief. Next we are to see this internally smeltecl unity of form and matter exploding into a thousand scintillas.

II.

The Aphoristic Goethe.

Thus we may name an important and persistent strain of Goethe's complete life-poem, which culminates in the present Epoch. The best commentator on this art-form of the poet, namely Loeper, declares that Goethe has his distinctive aphoristic year, which was 1814, quite as he has his special ballad-

year in 1797. The tendency to express his immediate state of mind in short snappy sentences or aphorisms belongs to his whole life, though it took various forms. One of his friends records him as saying that the events of the day passing through his soul would often explode of themselves into versicles. Such utterances might take the form of the proverb; indeed the collection of them in his works constitutes the greatest, deepest and most comprehensive of all proverbial philosophies. Goethe loved the proverb, the pithy worldly-wisdom of the people, and often translated and transformed old samples of it coming down the ages.

In general his aphoristic manner is a sudden spirt from his underworld, and shows quite every phase of his native Genius. It perpetuates his youthful outbursts breaking up into the placid stream of his old-age. And many of them are protests against the tendencies of the time, literary, scientific, political, and carry a quick sharp sting. Thus they too have in them a reminiscence of his early period and frequently bear a tinge of Titanism. Compared to his *Elective Affinities*, which is one of his most concentrated and most carefully organized books, his aphorisms are scattered irregular fire-works shooting in all directions. Each of them on

the whole is individualized, and demands its own special interpretation. Thus they represent the single atoms of the one great organism of Goethe's life-poem, they are the primordial units, or perchance, thought-cells of which his Genius built its edifice. Specially characteristic of his Third Period is this atomizing of his creativity; we should note that even into the close texture of *Elective Affinities* bursts up the gnomic jets of Ottilia's diary. Something of the same sort, but less pronounced we find already in *Meister's Apprenticeship*, especially in the so-called Indenture.

Such aphorisms will hardly bear connected reading, because their nature is disconnection itself. The poet compels the reader to make of his mind a microscope, in whose field is held for minute examination the wee bright particle of molecular Genius. Our excellent editorial guide, Loeper, has counted and annotated "more than eight hundred" such poems. To these rhymed aphorisms are to be added the "Sayings in Prose," of which more than a thousand have been published, maxims and reflections on Art, Nature, Ethics. They show the material of his works as yet unorganized, and give us many a peep into the author's work shop, with fleeting glimpses of his world-view reflected in multitudinous

facets. Really they reveal to us the protoplasmic Goethe, yeasting from his own sources and gathering from all quarters, quite unformed yet getting ready to shoot into crystals. Let us mark that they are not fragments of great works left unfinished, such as we find in his Frankfort Epoch; they reach below all the drifting torsos of his life-poem, and show us the rudimentary germs of his creation, the very embryology of his Genius.

The most extensive as well as the most important part of these aphoristic treasures is embraced under the rubric of *Tame Xenia* contrasting evidently with the *Xenia* of the Goethe-Schiller Epoch which must have been untamed in comparison, more bitter and personal. Chiefly, however, there is a striking difference of form; the antique measure is dropped and the Teutonic rhymed epigram takes its place, wherein is indicated that the poet's classic Period is definitely transcended. Twenty years ago he would have written these epigrams in the hexametral elegiac meter, for he was then in the full poetic overflow of his Greek mood. But now he epigrammatizes himself and the world in the native verse of his folk, to which he has returned. In our judgment no part of Goethe's works is subtler, more self-revealing,

or contains so many gold nuggets, but you have to dig.

Though Goethe has evolved beyond his classicism, he is still tempted to write a drama in the antique form and measure, yet with a modern content. This is known in his works as the *Awakening of Epimenides*. In spite of striking passages, it was a failure since it ran counter to the sweep of his Genius, and he undertook to concoct something which he had not experienced. Still as a failure it has an interest in the life-poem of Goethe; it is suggestive as a warning, and may be looked at as a sign-board pointing out whither he was not to go. So the great poet who here turns down his former hero Napoleon, suffers his Moscow defeat in the act.

But hardly is this aberration over when Goethe by way of reaction, leaps into his native element, and our Phileros, the lover of Love breaks forth with a new sunburst of his primordial poetic Self. It is recorded that in July, 1814, he concluded after several months of travail his awakening of the aged, hoary Epimenides, who never did get really awake in spite of the desperate proddings of the poet's pen-point. Then he hurried away on a trip to Rhineland where he first saw Marianne Jung soon to become Marianne

Willemer by marriage. The date of this first sight of a woman who again started the whirlpool of his elemental love is duly documented as August 5, 1814. So we are whelmed into another passionate Epoch of his life-poem, with its round of volcanic emotion, poetic utterance and confession, which bring alleviation and final quiescence, but only after a time of throeful renunciation. For both the man and the woman are married already, and thus re-enact the tragic conflict of *Elective Affinities*, but without the tragedy, let the Lord be thanked. For we are getting interested to see if the old man can have still another upburst of his youthful passion, with its accompanying pyrotechnics of love poetry. Just hear him sing a line to his gray hair:

Doch wirst du lieben.

*CHAPTER EIGHTH.**MARIANNE WILLEMER.*

She was already in her thirtieth year when she suddenly entered this epochal moment of all her days, and Goethe was just rounding his sixty-fifth year. Thus she was not exactly young, nor without some experience of life, for she had passed her early teens as an actress, who could also dance and sing on the stage with much applause. The Frankfort banker Willemer had become interested in her, and when she was sixteen had removed her from her uncertain theatrical environment to his home, where she was reared along with his own daughters. Now the curious fact peeps out mid surmises that a few days after Goethe first saw her, Willemer marries her, though she had been an inmate of his household some fourteen years, and he had reached the age of fifty-four. Goethe was invited to the wedding; he found, however, a good excuse for keeping away. But the obstacle of marriage, if it was designed to be such, never stopped the untamed cyclone of love when it once got under way; it had to whirl out its course to a finish.

It should not be omitted that Willemer had a widowed daughter, Rosette by name, who was living with him at this time, and who also appears to have been fascinated by the poet. She has left a description of him: "What a man, and what feelings move me!" He is a "unique nature, one cannot help loving him, and entirely confiding in him." Indeed Rosette seems to rival Marianne at times in her attentions to the poet, but any outbreak of jealousy between the daughter and her step-mother must be left to each reader's view of human nature under the circumstances. Still there was quite a little cross-fire of the Love-God in that country residence of Willemer called not without some hidden adaptation the Tannery (*Gerbermühle*) where Goethe was staying. Such an environment, however, our Phileros, when obsessed by his elemental mood, was apt to call up about him any where.

There is no doubt that the two souls who had found each other out in the rapture of creative love, which at once had to seek utterance in poetry from both the man and woman—they were Goethe and Marianne. Herein she differs from all the others of her sex listed in Goethe's calendar of love: she possessed the poetic gift in a high degree, and she was capable of being so inoculated with

his Genius that she could equal if not surpass him in his own sovereign line of soulful song. Very different was she in this respect from her predecessor, the tender, slender Minna, who had no peculiar spiritual dower except the unconscious magic of her maid-
enly personality. But Marianne we cannot conceive without a certain self-assertion and self-awareness of her power; she dared enter the lists with the world-famous poet and engage him in a tournament of verse on his own ground; but what is most remarkable, she carried off the prize. Thus Phileros has found a new woman, perchance just the new woman who keeps step with him in his own passion, and at the same time challenges him to the highest expression of his art. She shrank not in awe at the presence of the great man, but she faced him as an equal, being able to requite not only his love, but his Genius at its topmost creative bent. No wonder that Goethe called her "the little Blücher" in admiration of her heroic daring against himself.

But it is time to designate the chief poetic fruit of this Epoch in whose heart we have not only to see the form but to hear the voice of Marianne Willemer.

I.

The West-Eastern Divan.

Not to our mind a happy title for such a poetic product, though we feel no call to select another in its stead. Still its doubleness has its purport for the present Period, as has been already noted of *Truth and Fiction*. Goethe is here seen orientalizing himself, or trying to do so, for the contribution of the East runs not very deep or strong in his work. It is German in its meter except a few desultory imitations, German in its spirit, in its love, in its scenery, despite some pencil strokes from the land of the desert and of camels. The poet in this case never saw the poet's land, never looked on the real Sul-leika of the harem or her folk; never had the Oriental experience except through books. Hence his present poetic transformation was very superficial compared to that which he got from Italy and the classic world. Really there was no second birth of the spirit here, no Oriental palingenesis in this Epoch. To be sure he sings somewhat of the Prophet and the Koran, but their religion is rather his poetic plaything than his serious world-view. His style is not that of Oriental poetry, with its metaphorical rainbows and tortuous arabesques of fantastic forms; rather it is

classic in its simplicity and directness. Joyously the poet is at home in his native Rhine-land, which he is now visiting and in whose environment he is composing most of these poems. Its wine he is drinking in disregard of the Mohammedan law, even if Persian Hafiz set the example. The scrupulous Occidental reader may think that his love is the most Oriental thing about him, showing a streak of polygamy in the fact that he has a wife sitting at home during all this poetic effervescence over Marianne.

With many a keen thrust does our Jesuit Pater Baumgartner plunge the dagger of his Mephistophelean sarcasm into this new love-book of our Phileros. He says that "from an old man, husband, father, statesman, savant, the first genius of all Germany, we had a right to expect something better than that he should sit down under the tree of his youth and start to piping again seductive love-ditties." A very undignified business at least it is for such a lofty dignitary, with his ever-recurring refrain about wine, women and song, which grates infernal discord on the monastic ear of Anti-Phileros. Certainly the latter has good ground for complaint. But listen to a sharper swish of his dagged words: "The poet (Goethe) here affirms amatory song to be his supreme call-

ing, in which his sensual glow flames up into lust-drunk images, while the strains addressed to his cup-bearer are companioned with Oriental harem-love, and show a nuance of pederasty, till at last in Paradise the houris float around the poet with their felicity.” Thus the wire-edged tongue of the priest slashes this *Divan* for its voluptuous Orientalism, not without justice. But how can the celibate love any love, even the monogamous, which he has holily abjured, not to speak of the polygamous? Still less can he love our *Phileros*, the lover of love, poetizing his master-passion in thousandfold witchery, both bidden and forbidden.

Now there is no denying that the poet by the magic of his art has overspread his work with an Oriental atmosphere, very hazy indeed and intangible, but subtly poetic and entrancing. To be sure his muse does not embrace the whole Orient; India and China are left out though he has touched both elsewhere; Judea, too, is eschewed in spite of his early biblical associations. Persia is the land of the *Divan*, and to a less extent Arabia with its religious consciousness. Chiefly the reading (in 1813-14) of the Persian poet Hafiz in Von Hammer’s translation furnished his dominant Oriental motive. He became absorbed in that far-off poetic world, so re-

mote in place, time and social order, and sought to reproduce and relive it in his spirit. Moreover he was driven to take flight to the distant Orient through the fresh turmoil produced by the Napoleonic wars in Europe during 1814-15; then the increasing wretchedness of his own household made him flee from home to wineland and loveland for the rescue of his supreme vocation. Thus he was scourged in imagination out of Europe by political and domestic demons, and became ideally a fugitive to the Orient though really his flight turned westward to the near-by Rhine valley with its wonderful care-drowning grapevines full of poetic fluidity, to which was added the miraculous epiphany of the Love-God.

The Divan as a whole is a phasis of the aphoristic Goethe, whose general character has already been considered. The book is made up of several hundred short poems which are mostly constructed and tempered like the *Tame Xenia*, being brief aphorisms, the peculiar art-form dominating the old-age of the poet. Moreover this art-form harmonizes well with the sentential wisdom which we couple with the Oriental sages, and easily takes the hazy atmosphere of Goethe's East. This somewhat protoplasmic mass of aphorisms is divided into twelve Books rather ex-

ternally by the author, since some of their rubrics may mean quite the same thing or indeed anything. The question has arisen: does Goethe orientalize Germany or germanize the Orient? The process is somewhat of both ways; still the inner is essentially Teutonic, while the outer is partly but by no means exclusively Oriental (or Persian). The whole is a collection of atomic versicles, showing sometimes a brief connection, but without any pervasive structural organism.

Now out of this poetical conglomerate rises up a group of lyrics, which bears a distinctive character in contrast with the rest of the Divan. It is called the Book of Suleika (VIII) and is the joint product of the two lovers, Goethe and Marianne (Persianized in names as Hatem and Suleika). It is the real Book of Love recording the mutual passion of the man and woman, and written right in the fire of their white-hot experience. Now the surprising fact is that the poems of the woman are the better, more deeply and sincerely intoned, than those of the man, more love-lorn and heart-broken, though she never thought of dying of a broken heart. Her love trickles into tender words more spontaneous and self-giving, as if it was her very first; while we feel that Goethe is an old and somewhat hardened lover who has made

many a campaign before this, so that he knows all about it, and cannot let himself go so naively and unbosomingly. In the original edition her poems were published under his name, and the secret of her authorship was not revealed till after her death in 1860, and then but partially. To this day their respective portions cannot be fully distinguished, especially in the Book Suleika, which she not only inspired but helped create. It would seem that the mated songsters often sang in rivalry, each contributing a verse to the same poem or even a line, somewhat as Goethe and Schiller once did in composing the *Xenia*. Still the most heartfelt genuine lyric in the Divan is wholly the work of Marianne (VIII, 42). But she, though a gifted versifier, never reached the same height before or afterward; Goethe's love made her a genius not only beyond herself but even beyond himself at her one supreme moment. That was indeed among the poet's peculiar gifts; he often inoculated the lesser brain with his own creative power, as if he could tap the eternal sources not solely for himself but also for others, especially by his spoken word and his presence.

But the time comes for the final bitter word: renunciation. Goethe knows that he has reached the jumping-off edge of the

abyss; he looks over, then turns and flees back toward dull prosaic Weimar and Christiane, from bright poetic Rhineland and Marianne, after sending to her a dark hintful letter in which he speaks of “a chasm which he must now close.” His traveling companion has left on record that “he was terribly broken up and could not sleep.” He had two love-seasons at the Willemers, in 1814 and 1815; yet in July 1816 his longing drove him irresistibly to make a start for yet another, but a few miles outside of Weimar his carriage upset, and he turned back, obeying his strong premonition that he had received a providential warning. He never saw Marianne again, yet her complacent husband visited Goethe at Weimar, but without his peerless, though perilous spouse.

A new shift of destiny took place when in June, 1816, Christiane passed beyond, and the widowed Goethe at the age of 67 was thrown back into the unmarried freedom of youth.

II.

The New House of Tantalus.

Meanwhile into this bright exuberant love-life of our Phileros was spinning that other dark tragic thread of destiny of which we

have already sighted ominous appearances. The two strands, indeed, have the strange propulsion to wind alongside of each other through the poet's whole career as springing from the same elemental source of his deepest being; the violation of Tantalus is still at work and is slowly marching toward the doomed retribution.

The years 1816-17 constitute a pivotal era in the family of Goethe. Christiane was the first to vanish, perchance more sinned against than sinning; but her sinning was not meager as she flung herself over to drink, dance and death. Goethe had evidently given her up, and ran off from a hopeless problem, seeking love, the prime need of his existence, away from home, for we have to remember that Christiane was dying of a slow but mortal malady while his affair with Marianne was going on. Still his diary shows that he was near her during her closing hours. But report has handed down that August could not be induced to go to the bedside of his departing mother. In her final illness "she was unable to speak, having bitten her tongue through" (letter of Madam Schopenhauer who gives other horrible details of Christiane's last moments, possibly exaggerated). Warmly defended, hotly censured, the humble folk-girl is destined to be for all time,

having become a world-known character through her wifehood with a Genius and especially through her motherhood of the House of Tantalus. Who wishes to judge her? We do not, though we have to put her into her place in the doomful evolution of Goethe's life-poem. At least so much may be said of her: she was no Fate-compeller, her lot was too much for her, and down she went in the sweep of her own deed, which she possessed not the power to meet and undo.

After her death there was a reconstruction of Goethe's household, since Christiane seems to have been regarded as the curse-laden, doom-bringing member upon whom the first stroke of the avenging Parcæ fell. There can be little doubt that Goethe, forefeeling the nemesis in his family as it had gone hitherto, resolved to raise a bulwark against the lowering menace. The central difficulty lay in his son, now some twenty-six years old, in whom he must have already noticed the fatal birth-marks of the House of Tantalus. All Weimar knew, and the father must have known, too, that the son for years had been addicted to intemperance and incontinence, a double inheritance from both parents, intensified by his spotted social position. The anxious father must have asked, looking backwards and forwards: Can I forestall the

consequences of my deed, and ward off the clutch of Fate from mine own? At any rate the old Goethe resolves to re-constitute his family by the legal marriage of his son to a woman who might be able to rescue his blood from the lot of a Tantalid. Thus his descendants would be born in an institutional order, and restored to their legitimate social station. So he thought to counteract his primal violation and save his House from its over-hanging doom.

Can he thus reverse the rushing wheels of Time? Much depends upon the woman selected for this task. Ottilia Von Pogwisch was of noble stock, her mother had been divorced from her husband, a Prussian officer, and the daughter had enjoyed little domestic training. She, at the age of 21, was married to August Goethe, June 17, 1817, who was then reported to have been deeply in love with a folk-girl, but of such a union his father would not hear, possibly because it was too much like his own. Still the young pair seem to have shown attachment for each other at first, but in time the emphatic uncongeniality of their dispositions began to show itself. Three children were born to the couple ever growing more unhappy and estranged. The young husband never gave up his undomestic habits, and the young wife was totally unable

to reclaim him, but rather showed a special ability in driving him, through her temper and conduct, to take refuge in his inherited fatalities.

Such was the second family in the tragic line of Tantalus. But the plan of Goethe to reconstruct his House on an aristocratic basis and to thwart the consequences of his primordial transgression failed totally. Where lies the blame? Again the woman has received no little censure, and left behind her a long line of mal-odorous scandal, not without a good deal of provocation. She was a person of decided talent in her way, which, however, turned not in the direction of wifehood and home-making, and of rightly mothering her own children and thus rescuing them from their blood's curse. Instead of averting Fate from the House of Tantalus, her unhappy bent seemed to further it, so that she too became a Tantalid quite as much as her husband. The old poet had often to flee from this second household with its awful domestic dissonance, in spite of strong attachment to his grandchildren. Otherwise he too would have been whelmed into that family maelstrom of nemesis, which often prevented him from using his weapon of salvation, his pen, with which he could stab back all his stabbing demons.

Thus the two women, Christiane and Ottilia, placed by fortune at two different turning-points in the destiny of their families, show themselves not only unequal to their task, but they aggravate by their lives the transmitted malady. Frail mortals, objects of tragic pity rather than of bitter reproach they appear in this life-poem of Goethe sinking under the burden of a curse, which it was their supreme call to mitigate or even to make undone, but they could not. They were not Iphigenias, lofty mediatorial characters of women able to lift the doom of evil from the House of Tantalus. Rather they begot it anew and sent it on down time through their progeny, such a baleful maternity was theirs, yet sprung of their deeds. It should be noted (to avoid confusion) that this real living Ottilia, the Tantalid of Goethe's own household, is a very different character from his ideal Ottilia, the saint of his *Elective Affinities*.

Still our interest somehow will turn back to the son, August Goethe and query: How can he, surely fated in this environment, escape from the outstretching clutch of Nemesis which he has given more than one evidence of having forefelt and even foreseen? Has he the inner strength to reconstruct his own world and live in that, having freed him-

self from the ever-pursuing Furies of his father's transgression? Again the sympathetic spectator of his lowering lot cannot help crying out to him through all space and time: "Flee, flee, young man, leave Germany, leave Europe, get out of the all-encompassing soul-crushing shadow of thy great parent; go to the future, to America whither the tide of Europe-transcending migration is now setting in, even to the Mississippi. There thou canst build thy life over in freedom and make it thine, unoppressed by the hugest fame in thine old Fatherland. Take thy heart's choice, thy folk-girl along; change thy name to hers if need be, too much papa thou hast here in Weimar and always wilt have; get rid of pedigree, aristocracy, kinship, with its damnation; cut down thy genealogical tree to the last root, be a self-sufficient man on the free prairies of Illinois whither many of thy countrymen have gone and more will yet go; there thou canst dare the Fates of thy Tantalian family to the uttermost."

Will he hearken to the urgent whisper of the Upper Powers? For he must have heard it, since it was rife in Germany at the time. Goethe himself has noted it already in his *Meister*. And it is some forty years since that the poet's daring sweetheart, little Lili,

challenged him to flee with her to America away from domestic and social obstacles to their union, but he backed down. And so now August Goethe lets his father practically select his uncongenial but aristocratic bride, and thus determine his destiny as a Tantalid. Hapless son! once it was too much mother till her death removed the ever-present reminder of his birth's stigma; now it is too much father driving him to the renascence of the House of Tantalus, and the second more terrible enactment of its tragic doom. Alas! he too was no Fate-compeller, and so at the most important node of his life he gave up his man-renewing will, drooping down into a wretched second Tantalus.

Let us now picture the hero of this life-poem, our Goethe—for he is a hero in an altogether new line of heroism—standing erect amid his unheroic family, Tantalus overtowering his four Tantalids, whose doom he had already forefelt and even foretold—what can he do? Like a poor fated mortal will he cower down a coward before the nemesis of his own deed, and slink away silently into his grave? Not at all; on the contrary he will love again, and be rejuvenated and recreated to a fresh masterful productivity, the new hero of his own new Iliad. So behold once more the grand regenerating metamorphosis

of his poetic soul; the old bowed-down Fate-spent Tantalus leaps up at the push of his elemental passion, and is re-born as youthful Phileros, the lover of Love singing and enacting his own renewed creation.

CHAPTER NINTH.

ULRIKE VON LEVETZOW.

"What! another crisis of love! And more desperate than ever! and the poet in his 75th year!" So exclaims the appalled reader at the upburst of this new turn in Goethe's passion-tossed career. Indeed it would almost seem as if this was the hardest wrench of his life in downright agony of heart. Dare we suppose that his emotional nature, being somewhat crystallized by old-age, when the inner earthquake heaved it up to the surface, was shivered to poetical fragments of which he succeeded in putting together a few choice gems in his famous *Trilogy of Passion?* Certainly no occurrence in the surprise-freighted story of his days has caused so much gossipy wonder, varying from scorn to sympathy. It has undoubtedly a comic side, almost grotesque, especially to those not so old as he was. Goethe was then unmarried, a free ranger in love's demesnes; but look at his silvered hair, his corrugated face, his senile stoop! Then consider his colossal fame upreared in massive deeds of Genius —what a unique node of his personality! For Goethe was, in this act, still true to him-

self; he was still Phileros, even if the gray Phileros, enacting the last real love-drama of his life with his primordial demonic power. We shall see that he connects this experience with his *Werther*, as if interlinking last and first in one great cycle of his heart's deepest utterances.

The fair maiden who was the cause of such a mighty overflow of his soul's inner reservoir of passion, was Ulrike Von Levetzow, whom the poet in his double superlative mood declared "the loveliest of the loveliest shapes." At the watering-place Marienbad lay the scene; the hidden emotion had been intensifying for several summers till at last in 1823 it broke forth with a volcanic energy, and all the idle tongues in such a resort went to wagging upon the future marriage. The young lady was still prattling in her teens; Goethe was hurrying dangerously upward in the seventies. Faithful Eckermann has left us this haunting picture evidently drawn after the lover's own sketch: whenever he would hear her girlish voice outside, but not far from his window, "he would at once seize his hat and hasten to her presence; he never missed an hour which he could pass at her side, and thus he lived happy days, till the painful parting came upon which he made a very beautiful poem."

One report is that Goethe himself asked the mother for the daughter's hand in marriage; others say that this ticklish duty was undertaken for him by the ever-friendly Duke of Weimar in person who happened to be on the spot at the right moment. The outcome, however, was that the mother in the very nick of the crisis, bundled up her daughter, and secretly took to flight from the watering-place which was all agog at the spectacle. And that mother, now a widow with three daughters, had been known to Goethe in her younger days and had been selected by him as the best representative of his *Pandora*. This was back in 1806. Posterity will always wonder why he did not take to the mother who was still young enough to be easily his child, and was a favorite of his during many years. Too old, thinks the ever-youthful poet, and passes her by so that it seems possible that her resentment may have had a part in the drama. But Phileros has dropped back some fifty years to Werther's time and is completely rejuvenescent through love; indeed Phileros properly knows no age. So he must have youth as his right counterpart, whatever the grumbling years may say.

At any rate Goethe had again to be resigned at the defeat of his dearest hope. The

result was another journey through the dark valley of renunciation, in which he was almost torn to pieces by his eagle-clawed resurgences of emotion. But he emerges once more with a fresh vitality; indeed after passing through the crushing discipline of love he appears to be endowed with a young creative energy. We have repeatedly noticed the fact: at certain intervals of life he is dipped by the Powers into the original fountain of regenerating love, whereby he comes forth new-born with a fresh lease of elemental creativity, out of which spring new forms of his genius. So it happens that after this fiery ordeal which seems to reach down to primal creation, and to recreate his ageing energy, he starts with youthful vigor to complete the greatest and most elaborate works of his life, among which are his *Faust*, his *Meister*, and his *Autobiography*, not to speak of many minor activities. It is, however, the last Epoch of his long career, he is now on the home-stretch of his final Period, which will yet continue nearly another decen-nium.

If we carefully compare and weigh the three or four years before the Epoch of Ulrike, we shall find that the poet appears on the wane, he seems to be settling into the natural quiescence of age, as if he were get-

ting ready for the close. He is putting his literary house in order, that he may permanently depart. He began (1819) his Annals, some brief jottings of his past days; he hurriedly patched together his novel *The Journeymanship*, and published it, though incomplete; with the new lease of years which he did not then foresee, he will take it up again, renovate it and finish it. Poetically he flung off an occasional lyric, not his best by any means, and spat out many a pungent little epigram, often very keen and suggestive, which we may track down through many moods and times under the title of his *Tame Xenia*. He still flees to Natural Science, his Achillean tent in which he sulks over his lack of appreciation, and damns with unctious the regulars of the scientific guild, the Professors.

Also during these ominous years the domestic tragedy threading through his life grows deeper and more lowering; the marriage of his son which he hoped might avert Fate, threatens to hasten it and to make it more terrible. Husband and wife have found themselves totally unfitted for each other, and uncongeniality reaches down to the Inferno of a mutual curse. August Goethe helps himself out through drink and strange women and the wife takes her way of getting

even. The unhappy father has often to run from his own house in order to find some peace and to gain a little composure to do his work in the world—which was his way of saying his prayers. No wonder he felt the end of himself drawing near in his family's cataclysm. It was in 1819 that he published his *Divan*, and snuffed out in printer's ink the last flickerings of his last love for Marianne Willemer. Now what is he going to do? For Goethe's genius stumbled and writhed in outer darkness without the love of woman. He once exclaimed in humorous despair: "Nobody in love with me, I with nobody in love:" which may sound comic to you and me, but to Phileros it meant the extinction of his creative soul, if not of life itself.

But now upon the aged poet thus descending life's declivity into the gloom of Erebus, suddenly darts the shining shape of Ulrike, "the loveliest of loveliest shapes." The dawn of another youthful passion drives away the clouds, at once senescence begins to transmute itself into juvenescence, and a renewed genetic energy starts to recall his eclipsed if not dying spirit from its depths. Love, the creative might of the Cosmos, has tapped afresh the sources of his Genius and set them to flowing once more in sun-lit ebullience of poetry. For his love possesses the

original power of recreating the old man both mentally and physically, so that he sets forth again to grapple with his colossal task of working out fully his total life-poem, since it is not yet complete. But the transition cannot be made without shaking up the old framework and re-incarnating it with fresh life responsive to the new birth of his Genius. He almost went to pieces in the process of renewal. One is reminded of the fabled daughters of Pelias who cut up their aged father's body, and throwing the slices into a cauldron of hot water, sought to boil the years out of his tottering flesh and thus restore him to youth. Maiden Ulrike, unconscious of her dower, put the old poet through some such seething process, painful within an inch of death, but the result followed that he survived and was made over into a new Epoch of his Genius, even if the last.

Thus it comes that our Phileros, the lover of Love, has again to renounce that which constitutes the very essence of his individuality and to recover himself for his grand positive achievement which is to wind up to a full finish his long and varied career. We may recollect that this Period—the third—opened with the preluding passion of the poet for Minna Herzlieb, who also stirred his production to a many-sided utterance, and

whom he likewise had to renounce after suffering for years from a bleeding heart "which is afraid to get well." He at that time hovered about the age of sixty years, and was bonded legally to a wife, who, however, in her physical and mental decadence, possessed not the least power of rousing his Genius from its torpid emotional sources to creative activity. Goethe was husband to Christiane, Phileros was not, and never could be. That was the fatal dualism rending his life atwain, and making him a living Tantalus, and dooming even his children's children to be Tantalids shent with tragic destiny.

Another reflection concerning our Phileros rises in the present connection: this is the last of his elemental or cosmic loves which had the power of penetrating to the very center of his being, perchance of all being, and from thence making him over, renewing if not re-creating his original personality. He is still Goethe, yet different from any previous form of his selfhood. Undoubtedly he now harks back to his past, recalling himself and even repeating himself; still the repetition undergoes a unique change of significance when shifted from life's prelude to the finale. According to our view he renounces many other things in this last Epoch besides

the love of Ulrike. His literary form is not the same, his poetical creed undergoes a transmutation, his world-view takes a new tinge, if not a new article of faith, his attitude toward man and the universe shows a fresh evolution. The renunciation of that last love overwrought his whole existence. Still he is Goethe, but Goethe reviewing Goethe, making his life whole, and universalizing all his multitudinous work into a total life-poem ere he quits the terrestrial scene.

Renunciation as immediate, taken simply by itself is a negative act which is to get out of itself and rise to a positive doing. "Separation is death," cries the poet in his first agony; still he separates from Ulrike and lives; he renounces her and then renounces his renunciation, and mounts higher. That love for just the one here and now he has to give up, but he transfigures it into an universal love, which is a consecrated service to man. Such a deep undertone we can hear throbbing through his later labors, even if there be relapses. This we may well deem the final discipline of Phileros, after a very chequered career, which we have followed from its first sensuous outburst to its universal human service.

It remains to take a few brief glimpses of the leading works which are strown along

this final turn of the poet's life-cycle. Some ten years we may reckon its duration, from the first tick on the horologe of love at Marienbad to the expiring breath of the aged lover in his Weimar home. An Epoch of rejuvenant activity and unique productive greatness it is for us, though often decried as a time of mental decay and poetic senility, especially by younger biographers and critics. But we shall treat it as a right integral part of the one great poem which, we hold, Goethe not only wrote but lived.

I.

The Trilogy of Passion.

The immediate utterance of the poet's heart-break in the affair of Ulrike bears the foregoing title. The poem designs to give the primal round of his intense experience in all its concentration of passion. A very famous piece of work it is; it flows molten from the heart at white heat, as if forged in the central fires of existence. It is worthy of earnest notice not only for its intrinsic merit, but also as being germinal of the present Epoch, the brief yet volcanic overture of the coming poetical Decennium.

From what has been said, the poem will

not let itself be read easily; its purport cannot be picked up from the surface and lightly filliped off by the average newspaper glance. You have to fling yourself into its fiery furnace and glow with its passion—a thing not to be done off-hand at any minute. The poem is not a long one, yet quite long enough for such a trying ordeal; otherwise the reader would not hold out. But so much he must stand if he would understand Goethe. As the name indicates, the poem has three parts, each of which may be touched upon briefly.

I. The superscription of the first part is addressed *To Werther*. Thus the old poet connects himself with his first love-hero, reaching back some fifty years or more. He conjures up the ghost of tragic Werther and makes it walk the earth again in company with himself who has just had another such experience. Moreover it should be noted that the same recurrence of Werther's spirit has taken place several times within the intervening half century. But Phileros here interlinks his earliest and his latest epochal loves, and in a pensive vein forebodes this to be the final round-up of his love-life.

Tell what is the central fact of this long discipline as soon as possible. Here it is: "The fascination of woman's form seizes us with violence," and this violence like the

earthquake is elemental, original in Nature herself, and may destroy the man as in Werther's case. But not in Goethe's case, for he has the mediatorial gift of expressing his pain and thus getting rid of it ere Fate whelms him under. Such is his God-given mastery of utterance which rescues him from the tragic backstroke of his own overpowering love. Just that was what saved him from Werther's lot long ago and is to save him now.

The poet gives a brief review of his stormy and stressful youth, and his escape from the crushing blow of love's last farewell, whereat the phantom indulges in a ghostly smile, seemingly the smile of a superior destiny. Then we hear the agonizing outcry: “Separation is death!” No, it is not death for Goethe and never has been in youth, middle life, or old age: listen to his strain which sings the deepest discord of his nature out of his days, which can again become free and creative and thus mediatorial for those smitten by a like blow of destiny. At last we may hear the preluding note of triumph in the distich:

How touching is it when the poet sings,
That he may shun the death which parting
brings.

II. The second part is entitled simply

Elegy, but it is very different in mood and poetic form from the sensuous exuberance of the *Roman Elegies* already considered. We hear now the rhymed music of a deep internality, and see no longer the outer plastic image moving to classical measures. The clear Greek world has sunk into modern subjectivity, which paints itself in all the colors of the rainbow, yet with a glowing intensity which burns. Let the prefixed motto be first pondered, in which Goethe cites himself, expressing a thought which he evidently deemed the key of his whole literary career: his poetical gift of utterance is God-sent, and is his redemption from his deepest sorrows, even from what might be otherwise for him the tragedy of life.

This Elegy is the longest part of the Trilogy (23 stanzas of six lines each) and gives in general the sweetest yet fiercest discipline of love which he, now looking backward in reminiscence, has passed through with Ulrike. Here appears the double wrench which makes him cry out at the start in the first verse: "Paradise, Hell gape open for thee," that is, for himself. But soon love translated him to its Heaven: "No wish, no hope, no longing remained unfulfilled," he had reached the stage of absolute triumph over finite existence in communion with this in-

carnation of "eternal beauty." Then his ecstasy throbs into particular memories, especially recalling the kisses, of which "the last one, brutally sweet" snipped atwain "the glorious network of intertwined loves." Now what? Our poor Adam looks back helpless "as if driven from his Paradise by a Cherub flaming," and the gates are locked, while his heart smites enthralled to the following list of demonic companions: "Melancholy, remorse, self-reproach and crushing anxiety;" so he names the infernal pack of hell-hounds that are snapping at his soul. Such is the sharp counterstroke which the old man feels for his indulgence in a young love, which surely will not be without its penalty. Thus the poet gives a peep into his inner reaction after the raptures of his intoxication. Still he recovers at the memory of "that last kiss;" nay, it seems that there was still another kiss after the very last one, "which she pressed upon my lips." In general, what an everlasting kisser was Goethe, certainly all through his poetry, and doubtless in reality! Happy man! he was not troubled by the modern compunction about the kiss that it is unhygienic. Thus Phileros portrays his dip into the fountain of love to the very bottom, and his resignation to its honeyed paroxysms.

But now for the other side—he rises out of this baptismal ordeal to a renovation of his will, to the quick deed, to new resolutions and fresh enterprises “when love spiritualizes the lover.” Moreover, “hope dawns again” and he is ready to face life with a renewed youthful energy. So Goethe was conscious of this reproductive power of an elemental love over his spirit. He could not control its coming, it was upon him ere he fully knew it; something transcendent it was which he had to accept and to pass through as a supernal visitation. Blame him if you will, we have seen that he blamed himself, for what else mean those throes of “remorse and self-reproach?” Still he refused to sink back resignedly into a deedless self-trituration even of conscience, which is simply destructive, but rose to a higher constructive energy till the very going-down of his octogenarian sun. Therein verily lies his evangel and his prophecy unto the future.

To a still loftier height does the poet bear upward his experience of this love: it brought him the peace of God, which he felt “in the presence of the all-loved being,” the sense of union with her, “of belonging to her,” lay deepest in his heart and joined him with divinity; “in a higher, purer, unknown, unnamed One, I am a participant when I stand

before her.” So the loved Ulrike becomes a mediator of the old poet with his God, and he actually turns pious—he uses the very word—while “all Egoism melts away;” and our Mephistopheles renounces “selfishness and willfulness” in the glance of this regenerating love. Such is the topmost height of the poem which preludes the key-note of his last Epoch now forthcoming. Still he has another relapse when he thinks of the separation; he wilts down again to a swooning away of resolution and will until “life and death grapple each other in furious combat;” he is scourged hither and thither by “an irresistible longing, there remains no counsel for him but infinite tears.” In this state he cries out: “To me the All is lost—I am lost to myself—I who was once the darling of the Gods,” who, however, have driven him through this hard trial to the highest exercise of Genius, to his self-utterance in poetry.

III. To this central poem there is an appendage which is called *Reconciliation*, and which celebrates the soothing power of music over the passion-torn heart, even hinting the divinely mediatorial value of harmonious tones as well as of tears. This is the poet's homage to the piano-playing of Madam Szymanowska, a Polish lady whose musical skill

made a deep impression upon Goethe at Marienbad, sensitive as he then was to the marriage of sweet sounds. But it would seem that his tender feelings afterward overflowed not only to the music but to the musician; so he is understood to intimate in the last verse in which "the lightened heart thankfully offers itself in return for an oblation so rich." Why not? The awful chasm caused by separation must be filled or at least bridged by another attachment, "and thus is felt the double bliss of love and music."

The reconciling Polish pianist with her sister followed Goethe to Weimar, doubtless through an invitation, but very willingly. It happens that reporter Müller has left a record of that time, and fails not to let us see that Goethe manifested "the double bliss of music and love" in her presence repeatedly. But it was not an elemental soul-searching love like that for Ulrike, rather was it a reminder or a re-echoing of that, a temporary relieving substitute. When the last parting from the Polish ladies took place, Goethe tried to be merry and humorous. But, says our reporter, all his forced fun was in vain, "the tears streamed forth, speechless he embraced her with the sister, and his look followed her a long time till she disappeared." That night he was prostrated by

a severe life-storming illness, from which he slowly recovered. The question will come up, how about the pianist on her side, for she too must have had a heart as well as lips. Old Zelter herein furnishes a clew from Berlin where Madam Szymanowska had given two concerts with success, and had paid him a visit. So he writes to Goethe: "She is madly in love with you, and has sent to you a hundred kisses upon my mouth." (Not cited by any other biographer of Goethe within our reach except the lynx-eyed Jesuit Pater, Baumgartner, who, though a vowed celibate, very dutifully and zestfully records in detail Goethe's love-scenes.)

II.

Wilhelm Meister's Journeymanship.

The title of this book in the original is *Wanderjahre*, usually translated into English by the word *Travels*, which is vague and not strictly pertinent, even if it has the high sanction of Thomas Carlyle. The work is the counterpart both in name and thought to the *Lehrjahre or Apprenticeship*, with which it is co-ordinate in a greater whole, and the designation should not fail to indicate such

a purport. Hence we altogether prefer the corresponding English term *Journeymanship*, which suggests life's workman who wishes to become master in the supreme art of living, and who must pass through the present stage in due order. And the name of the leading character which designates also the book is *Wilhelm Meister*, in English *William Master*, who is supposed to be in pursuit of his highest self as worthily realized, that is, in pursuit of *mastery* both in his inner world and in his outer vocation. Thus he, just through his calling, however humble it may be, is to rise to the all-rounded man, whose completeness is to be reflected in those three stages of his artisanship—the apprentice, the journeyman, and the master. And it should be added that these three stages are interwrought into one great totality of human development, which is ultimately the creation of the soul's very process, and hence is to be grasped finally as psychical.

It is true that Goethe does not carry the matter as far back as that. He is the poet who works instinctively, and presents what is immediate; still he is also profoundly reflective in this book, and throws many a glance into the last depths. It is, however, to be noted that Goethe never wrote the third

part of the grand evolution, namely the Mastership of William Master, in which the unheroic hero realizes himself fully in his vocation and in his world, rounding out to completeness his life's whole experience, and making himself an image of the All. Yet our author knows of this final part and in two or three passages he seems to give some promise that he intends such a continuation. But he was 80 years old when he brought to an end this second arc of Meister's cycle, and he must have forefelt that his own last arc would soon close. Besides, he had still another even more imperative task to perform in the completion of his *Faust*.

Nevertheless we cannot forbear the reflection that Goethe did actually finish the Mastership of the Master (so he was and still is often called) in the total round of his career. His biography should not fail to give the third part of the Master which he lived out if he did not fully write out. We are now engaged in contemplating the final Period of the poet, which is the revelation of his completed Mastership in which he attains the serenity and wisdom of age, after the volcanic upheavals of his youthful Apprenticeship, and the lofty, wonder-working productivity of his mid-life's Journeymanship. In the two parts of this Novel we may catch the outlines

of an universal Biography, even if the final inter-connecting link be wanting. Possibly Goethe intended to let the reader find it prefigured in several characters of the present *Journeymanship*, such as Makaria the celestial seeress, and the nameless mysterious wise-man (Book I, Chap. 12). Also many fragmentary incidents appear to gleam forward to some fulfilment; productive industry and emigration flash upon us rather as prophecies of a new order yet to be realized, while the repeated outlooks upon the New World, our America, which are so characteristic of this novel, seem to foreshadow another stage of History, and another institutional order transcending the European. All of which glances the poet throws upon Meister's potential Third Part.

The dominant note of the *Journeymanship* is education, and the remedial power which it shows for saving both the individual and society. The Novel opens with Wilhelm giving some very elementary instruction on Nature to his boy Felix; then both the father and son are put under training through a long line of formative experiences, which constitute the content of the work. Then in the last chapter, Wilhelm having acquired a special vocation, that of surgery, saves the life of his boy—an act of significant symbol-

ism doubtless intended by the poet. Thus the sweep of the book hovers between education and salvation as prelude and epilogue. And the first lesson of the first page is an object-lesson on a stone picked up by the boy, as if the parental teacher had just come from the school of Pestalozzi.

During the composition of this Novel, and indeed during Goethe's entire life, education was in the air, and had become in Germany an object of national striving. He had been in his young manhood thrown with that strange pedagogical reformer Basedow, of whom he gives a humorous description, but whose educational ideas struck root in his career. It was, however, the Swiss educator, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, who developed the movement for popular education which makes his name the greatest in this field. Goethe had met him and had been addressed by him in an urgent appeal for sympathy in his work. Nor must we forget the second greatest influence in modern education, Friedrich Froebel, with his gospel of the little child. Froebel came from near-by Thuringia, and attended the University of Jena where he must have often seen its chief promoter, the poet from Weimar. But the interest began to break over national bounds. Pestalozzi's school especially, the one at

Yverdon, became a center where inspecting visitors could be seen not only from every part of Europe, but America also furnished its contingent. Thus the education of the people had become an universal aspiration, manifesting itself in the best souls of the time. Hence we may see that the universal poet of the period tapped the deepest tendency not only of his own people but of all forward nations in the Novel of *Wilhelm Meister*, which is essentially educational in both parts.

Still Goethe, in order to perform his farthest-reaching world-literary achievement had also to have an immediate, personal push from his own environment. Everything which he wrote took its rise in his direct experience. He had to be living what he was writing. Accordingly, the fact which most intimately connects the author with his book is that he had, during these earlier years of composing *Meister*, a young son to educate. Hence the anxious father was incessantly pondering the problem: "What am I to do with this boy of mine? How can I train him to perform best his part in the world, and to fill his place in the social order?" The problem starts up decisively when Meister finds, in the *Apprenticeship* that Felix is his child, and it streams all the

way through the *Journeymanship* from the first point to the finishing.

To be sure the parent is to get his discipline likewise in the training of his son. He learns as much from his boy as the latter from him. Meister himself is not yet educated, he is still to acquire life's highest discipline. Hence there is a double educational thread spun through the *Journeymanship*, quite as we see in the *Odyssey* that father Ulysses and son Telemachus are each getting his training in accord with his environment and the needs of his years. The wandering parent Wilhelm, wandering so long not only physically, but mentally, is brought to concentrate upon a vocation; while the boy Felix must be inducted into his spiritual heritage transmitted to him by time through education. A double rescue, therefore, we may note at the conclusion of the novel.

We must not fail to put stress upon the most striking link of personal connection with Goethe. Felix is the natural son of Meister, whom the latter discovers by a curious chance when the boy is already a roistering youngster in need of his first lessons. Inevitably comes up to the reader Goethe's son August, also born out of wedlock, and now sorely requiring a right instruction. The lad some seven or eight years old must have

often intruded upon his father's study while the latter was writing the last books of the *Apprenticeship*, which already in 1796 he feels must have a second part for the sake of the boy as well as of himself. He makes various later attempts to complete it; in 1807 and in 1810 he works at it, but it refuses to get itself done. For the growth cannot be forced, it has at last to write itself from his own experience which is not yet ripe. He has to wait particularly for the son to evolve through training into character that he may see the fruit.

But we are to scan carefully the grand obstacle. There is an established educational order but the boy cannot share in that. If he were sent to the Public School with other lads, what would he not hear about his birth and his mother in every little squabble? August Goethe had to have his private teacher at home, cut off from the associates of his time of life. But for Felix the poet creates a peculiar pedagogical institute where his origin is not known, to which his father brings him. He must be trained to live in an institutional order outside of which he was born. Such is the living contradiction which the parent has brought into existence in his most loved human being and which he tries to solve through education. The result is

that we can feel all the throbs of Goethe's heart, all the anxieties for his irregular son, all the turns of his educational planning in Wilhelm's love and labor with Felix. We may well see in it his desperate effort to ward off the tragic consequences of his deed. In the Novel the son Felix is saved, but in the hard reality of life the son August perishes.

In such way we have to bring before us the most intimate and searching problem of Goethe's entire Second Period during which his only surviving child was to be educated. The mother in this sphere does not count except possibly as a disturber, for she had the name of coddling and spoiling her boy dreadfully, to which Goethe himself showed a tendency. Christiane possessed the least education, and drew a weak bridle on her impulse. School boys are the greatest teasers and even persecutors in the world; and August venturing among his playmates, could not help hearing that ugly word Bastard, and an even more humiliating well-known Shakespearean epithet applied to his mother. In these boys we may well see the institution wreaking its penalty upon the parents who had violated it and persisted in their violation. But the wretched innocent offspring has to suffer and is tragic.

Thus we may fully understand that Goe-

the writes this educational Novel from his own nethermost experience. He also gets to seeing that all literature, whatever be the form, is in its ultimate goal, educative, and belongs to the universal Institute of Education, whose supreme function is to reproduce in every born soul the institutional world in which it has to live. But here is a child born uninstitutionally; how is he to be rescued from the negation involved in his very existence? To be sure Goethe did at last legally marry Christiane; but the evil was done, even if the son looked on, being then over sixteen years old, "with great delight," it is said, for he had already felt the Hell of his origin. Still he did not and could not escape from it. In the Novel the illegitimate son is called Felix who is the happy, and the happy-making boy; but August was the unhappy one both in relation to himself and to his father, verily the Infelix.

III.

The Passing of Goethe's Son.

We have already noted that through Goethe's life-poem written out in multitudinous forms runs also a life-tragedy unwritten by him, but enacted during more than forty

years in many a scene which rouses the tragic catharsis of fear and pity. That son of his, born out of wedlock, then legitimated, finally married, and becoming himself the father of a family, perished at Rome, on the very spot where his own father broke through institutional restraint, and lived the life of a Titan defiant of the world's social order. This defiance he carried back with him to Weimar, and one of his first actions, after his return from Italy was to establish his free life of Rome in his relation to the humble maiden Christiane, utterly regardless of the age-honored prescription of the Family. In due time a son was born an outcast from the established society around him without any fault of his own, but assuredly with the fault of the father, and to a less degree of the mother. Thus the poor boy was from the start the child not merely of a sudden upburst of secret passion, but of a long-continued deliberate open transgression against man's primal institution, the domestic. He was deprived of his primordial human right, that of being born, not as an animal in the wilds but as person in a society which would recognize him as one of its own.

August Goethe started for Italy with Eckermann in April, 1830. The environment of Weimar had become unendurable, and he had

resolved to break loose, cost what it may. As his father and his grandfather had gone to Italy at an epochal time of their lives, so he fell upon the same idea. He had not redeemed the blot on his escutcheon by worthy deeds; such a manful fight with his fate lay not in him. The consequence was that in a kind of despair he had resigned himself to inherited tendencies, coming through both father and mother, chief of which were drunkenness and lechery. Thus he had helped to build his own Inferno in addition to the transmitted one from his parents. His utter decadence was whispered through all Weimar, and must have been well known to his father, as it was to his wife Ottilia, who did not fail to let her protests be heard. A most unhappy disrupted household was the result from which the aged poet often fled for peace and work. But in the deepest soul of him he must have felt that the awful situation involving himself and his posterity sprang from his deed, the curse was coming back. Still it is remarkable how silent his lip and pen, so often his confessional, kept upon this theme, the tragedy of all Goethe's tragedies. Perhaps, however, here and there we may catch up a word pulsing uncontrollably out of his heart. One report comes down that over the death of his son he broke

out in the midst of a conversation: "When he went away, I gave him up as lost;" then he dismissed the company. There is little doubt that the poet had held that opinion for years: how could help it? He had poetically seen and sung of the Furies who pursue human guilt through generations; listen again to that uncanny strain of the Parcæ in his *Iphigenia* whose power bursts up from his last conviction. That was written many years since, but time has furiously confirmed its truth in his own life. That chorus of one of his dramas prophetically chants itself through his whole life-drama.

What Goethe's own circle of acquaintances thought of the son's condition and forecast concerning his future doom just before his Italian journey is indicated in the letter of a Weimar lady which has been preserved: "The saddest thing is that all who could observe August in the last year, including his father, had to feel that his decease was the mildest thing that could happen." And that son himself in his deeper moments seemed to have a premonition of whither he was drifting. Here we put that unique little poem of his, gushing up from his soul's depths with an intensity equal to any lines his father ever wrote and flinging down his challenge to Fate itself:

I shall no longer be guided
In leading strings as hitherto:
Rather I shall break my chains
At the edge of the abyss and go free.

In this spirit, already long cherished and long suppressed, he at last set out for Italy. The startled Eckermann, his companion, who was not courting that sort of a destiny, turned back when the two had reached Genua, at the entrance of Italy, and had taken a peep over the edge of the abyss. August Goethe pushed on as if scourged by the Eumenides to his last lot, guzzling enormous quantities of drink, but sending to his father a regular diary of what he saw, but not of what he imbibed. Eckermann, gentle exemplary soul, sent along by the anxious old man as a model and a restraint for the son, is utterly helpless before a spirit who, having now gotten loose, is determined to break through all his restraints hitherto and dare his very existence. So the rather timid conductor went far enough to catch a glimpse of the awful hand of Fate, ready to smite the defiant transgressor, and shrank back from a task which neither he nor any mortal could fulfil. He received Goethe's consent to give up the journey. To be sure, when he appeared at Weimar he told an other reason for his return, good enough for public use. The aged

parent, having read the inevitable decree, received him without reproach.

The Italian trip of August Goethe bears the impress of a hurried feverish sweep to a desperate end. Several times he was laid up with illness chiefly from his excesses; but accident also played in to help along, when his collar bone was broken by the overturning of his vehicle. Still he always got up again and at last reached Naples. At Pompeii a lava-buried house was excavated in his presence to celebrate his father's birthday. It would seem that he found in this old city, overwhelmed in a mighty cataclysmic stroke of destiny, a peculiar, even sympathetic delight, as if he felt at home on that fated spot. So Goethe reports of him to Zelter. But soon he hastens to Rome, the darling of his father. There he is nobly received by the German artists, and in a hectic exaltation he begins to survey its treasures. But his life's structure was already burned out and ready to fall in. Very gently speaks the broken parent fore-feeling what is about to happen: "His letters thence failed to satisfy me; they showed haste, a sickly excitement." Enough; August died at Rome October 27, 1830, of a stroke of paralysis, according to the diagnosis.

One cannot help thinking of the symbolism

suggested by this sudden human exit on the spot where the parent had, some forty years before, deemed himself born again. But what was life to the parent was death to the son. Is there any supremely ordered connection between these two events? Tell us, ye Powers, was August Goethe spiritually begotten here and has only rounded out the hidden cycle of his existence? Is it possible to forget those *Roman Elegies* in which the poet lets us glimpse the undercurrent of his passion's life at Rome even if they are inspired by Christiane at Weimar? The son lies buried in the Protestant cemetery near the lonely Pyramid of Cestius, a sphynx-like monument stolid in its Egyptian melancholy, where his father once sketched in a pensive Roman mood his own grave, and later in one of his Elegies sang prayerfully that the God Hermes, conductor of departed souls, "gently lead him down to Orcus, past the tomb of Cestius." The much-enduring poet, now eighty-one years, stood up valiantly against the stroke of destiny, and could not be put down, recovering from a dangerous hemorrhage which struck him not long afterwards.

In this last act of August Goethe's life it is impossible not to think of the poet's Euphorion, son of Faust and Helen, and to recall the soulful dirge sung over his early

evanishment in the *Second Part of Faust*. That youth "was born to Earth's fortune of lofty ancestry," but he was "early lost to himself, and the bloom of life was torn away." The strain was intended for Byron, recently deceased, who passed beyond some six years before August Goethe. But the latter, too, ran "unrestrainedly into the net of impulse," defiantly breaking "with custom and law," with the realm of established order. So it was not given "thee" to perform the glorious action." Prophetically the father sings here a dirge over his own son, whom he then forefelt to be fated, to be "lost to himself," aye a scion of the God-shent race of Tantalids.

The dread, ever-lowering thought of being members of a doomed family broke out in a letter of 1848 from one of Goethe's grandchildren who designated himself and his surviving brother as "the relicts of the house of Tantalus." The passage seems to imply that it was a familiar conception in the family; whence did it take its rise? We repeat our decided belief that it came down from Goethe himself, upon whom the premonition must have been lastingly impressed by his long and intense occupation with the legend of Tantalus, who though favored of the Gods, nevertheless sinned against them, and whose

posterity continued to feel the scourge of the ancestor's guilt. The story of Iphigenia, who was a Tantalid wrestling with the curse of her blood and finally redeeming it, haunted him his whole life, for he could not help feeling that he was realizing it in himself and in his own. Walther Von Goethe, from whom the above citation is taken, was doubtless echoing some word of his grandfather dropped casually from the most veiled part of the poet's soul. The aforesaid Walther sighs forth another exclamation in the same letter: "The realm of the Eumenides is drawing to an end!" This can only mean a presentiment that with the decease of himself and his brother, both of them unmarried and childless, the tragedy of the German Tantalids will come to a close. And that is what actually happened not many years afterward.

Very significant is the fact that this tragic outcome was foreshadowed by Goethe the poet even before he had committed the deed. Forgive us if we once more repeat the song echoing the deepest, most prophetic note of Goethe's Genius, the song of the Fates in his *Iphigenia*, which was composed by him before he had ever seen Christiane. It chants that the Celestials turn away their joy-giving look "from races ill-fated," and shun to

gaze “on the children’s once-loved features still telling of their mighty parent.” So the poet foresings of himself and his son and his son’s sons, projecting out of his vision of the Divine Order the consequences of the act of insolence toward the Gods, which nevertheless he was on the point of doing, the fateful mortal. The Hymn winds up with a prediction suggestive of the future of Tantalus—of Goethe: “The soul under ban hearkens the song, his children’s doom he ponders and bows down his head.” So the poet, truly the seer and foreseer, tells of himself and his offspring long before any child of his has been born.

Such was the deepest strand of destiny in Goethe’s whole existence; still he wrestled with it, he never gave up, hence he was what he so often exhorted others to be—the Fate-compeller. He never succumbed to his own failings despite their terrible backstrokes; he never became the victim of his own negative deed, even if he had to walk through its infernal fires. Though his descendants were Tantalids and unheroically perished in their allotted portion, Goethe was in this sense not Tantalus; he was often whelmed into Tartarus by the Gods for his offenses, but he could not be kept there, he would break jail, even that of the underworld. His supreme

gift of expression was able to persuade the Furies to unchain him, and his life-poem is Prometheus unbound by himself. Already we have noted how he often saved himself from the final stroke through his literary confession.

At present his mediatorial word is renunciation, whose most trying test he has just passed through. The only son, so long the darling of his heart and his hope, he has had to renounce to Fate, indeed he has done so already a good many years, for that son was "early lost to himself," already in youth a Tantalid. In this final Epoch of his life-poem Goethe was his own greatest renunciant; we have already seen him as Phileros renouncing his last love; he has brought before us a world of renunciants, in his *Meister's Journeyman*; then this crowning trial in the death of his only son he has to meet and transcend through a fresh renunciation; but he, the octogenarian, does it with renewed valor and starts to work that he complete the final achievement of his life. "Forward over graves" he cries, even over the graves of his own blood; he has yet to finish his world-poem, whose thread has been spun through his entire conscious existence. *Faust* must be brought to an end ere his eyelids can droop to their final close.

IV.

Faust—Second Part.

Perhaps the most condemned of all Goethe's works is this, certainly the worst understood and the least accessible to the average consciousness. Still it keeps working its way in its own country and elsewhere. Though it has been adjudged to death, execrated and executed a thousand times by a furious army of critics and maddened readers, even hung in effigy by Herr Professor Vischer, it nevertheless stands up alive, and pushes ahead on its course with a considerable increment of vigor. It has quietly become a test of the literary size and quality of the people who fling it aside with a wry face after some inspection. It shows a decided tendency to criticise the critic, to measure its measurer while in the very act of measuring it and marking down its limits. A dangerous subject to handle it must be regarded; we may often notice its peculiar gift of turning the weapon directed against it to a boomerang which gives back to the assailant not only what he has done but what he really is.

In spite of the aforesaid danger, it may well be confessed that the Second Part of Faust has obscurities upon which the sun re-

fuses to shine, and sandy tracts in which the traveler longs for some greenery and a drop of water; then we come upon not a few chasms over which the bridge has to be taken for granted. Very much like the huge, sphinx-like face of nature is the whole poem, which must be explored by every reader as an undiscovered country. Still we cannot well fling away the earth-ball because it carries on its surface a dreary Sahara or an inaccessible Chimborazo.

Evidently *Faust* would not be the complete rounded-off work that it is without the Second Part; only a fragment of its own poetic universe would we then possess—surely a lapse from its supreme worth. In fact this poem could not in such case take its present lofty rank in the realm of Letters as one of the four greatest books which Europe has produced—books of such transcendent power and significance that we call them Literary Bibles. Just through this completed *Faust*, Goethe has taken his place with Homer, Dante, and Shakespeare. Excellent as are many of his other writings, he has concentrated himself in the one sovereign achievement by which he is ranked in universal Literature. To be sure, his entire career and all his works constitute one vast life-poem of which his *Faust* is but a single strand, though

the most essential and characteristic of himself and of his time.

Accordingly we put stress here upon the fact that the First Part alone cannot rise to the supremacy of a Literary Bible. It is in itself but a half, and on several lines decidedly the lesser half of the grand poetic totality, which crowns its maker with the ideal sovereignty of his age. On the whole, the First Part is not only a fragment but a negative fragment; its dominant note is the eternal No which kills man's hope and turns him into a destroying spirit of society and of himself. Satan is triumphant in *Paradise Lost*; and that is the doom of Milton's book as a Literary Bible for the race. The Prometheus of Aeschylus, as it has come down to us, is a negative poem, and leaves man defeated in the person of his divine protagonist. So is essentially the First Part of *Faust* taken by itself, even if it be more captivating through its smiting style and Hell-lit mockery. It is on the whole a descent to the modern Inferno, while the Second Part is an ascent, showing the negation overcome, and the hero's regeneration through his own activity. Thus it carries with it from start to finish a sense of restoration after the Fall of Man in the latest phase, and on this line moves parallel with all true Bibles religious

or literary. The First Part is then truly a part, the diabolic part of the poem, and may be defined as its spirit. Mephistopheles defines himself, "a part of that power which wills the Bad," even if in the end "it works the Good."

This leads us to note the distinctive character which Mephistopheles unfolds in the Second Part, quite the obverse of what he has shown hitherto. He is no longer the lord of the poetic mansion but the servant; though still destructive at the first turn, he is reconstructive at the last; he is not only negative, but self-negative, and as universal denier he comes in the end to deny himself. At the opening of the Second Part he enters the State as destroyer, sapping old Feudalism but bringing forth modern industrial Society. He violently sweeps away ancient Philemon and Baucis, but therein renders possible the new city of Faust and its freedom. His subtle doing of evil unfolds through his own self-undoing unto the good. He is the very incarnation of evil done that good may come. We repeat that this inner but very elusive dialectic runs through his whole manifestation in the Second Part and constitutes the deepest thread of its connection. The reader who cannot penetrate to this undercurrent and swim in it and with it through all the

eddies and tortuosities of the poem, remains but an outsider, enjoying possibly many of its single beauties and gazing at its passing meteors often in blank perplexity.

It is not simply the old Goethe, but the oldest unfolding to his final evolution and making his last confession preparatory to the close and evanishment beyond. He has shown himself a free man, upon a free soil which he has created, and in a free civic world which he has built. He has transcended in his deed the limit of Fate and then dies; through death he persists, "the trace of my earthly days cannot vanish in the ages." He has made mortality mortal, serving it up to itself, and thus rising to immortality; the tragedy of existence he enacts, yet makes it tragic to itself rather than to himself. It is the last and deepest turn of that self-negation which gives the soul of this Second Part, and is symbolized in Mephistopheles as the ceaseless undoer of himself in the final round-up of his activity.

The Second Part sends its rootlets back into Goethe's early Epoch at Frankfort, that unique springtide of his whole life, when his overflowing creative soul started to germinate. In an oft-cited letter to Wilhelm Von Humboldt, written only five days before his death (1832) he says: "It is over sixty

years since the first conception of Faust lay before me clear, but the succession of its parts less complete." There is no doubt that the appearance of Greek Helen was an element of this earliest conception, for she belongs to the primal Faust legend, to the puppet play, and to Marlow's drama. But he had not then conceived of the two Parts of his work; he had to grow many years into such magnitude of design. Greek Helen gave him great difficulty; she does not appear in the *Urfaust* nor in the *Fragment* of 1790; still she belongs essentially to the story and keeps teasing the author off and on during three decades. At last in 1800 he grapples with Helen in person and by herself, he proposes daringly to catch her fleeting shape and to charm her into writ. But he cannot do it yet, another three decades he has to wait; not till 1827 was the Lesser Helena published, being saluted in English with a subtle and laudatory review by the rising Phil-Teuton Thomas Carlyle. But the whole Helena of the Second Part, the Greater Helena we may call it for distinction (see our *Commentary* on Part II, p. 85) taking up more than half of the poem, was not finished till some four years later. A little before 1800, accordingly, perhaps already in 1797, the necessity of dividing his work into two Parts had dawned

upon the poet. But between them raged in his soul the conflict of the Classic and the Teutonic elements of his work, and he could not yet harmonize the contradiction. So he dropped the one, the Classic, and sped on to finish the other in the First Part, which he did by 1806, though it was not published till two years later.

Faithful Eckermann records that he was assisting Goethe to look over his papers for the purpose of completing the final portion of his Autobiography, when the question of the continuation of *Faust* arose. Shall the plan be merely described, or shall "the finished fragments" of the Second Part which lay there before them be supplemented and worked over into a whole? Eckermann urged it, but that was not enough. The aged poet was brought to turn the whole subject over in his mind afresh, and to ask himself: Can I finish this work now, after all these new experiences of life? He must have felt that he had compassed in himself Helen's whole career as representing the Classic Renaissance of his time. He had gone through her long discipline, but had transcended her, and so could portray her training and her tragedy in the universal poem. But how about Faust himself? Sometime in the early years of the century the new industrial world had

risen upon the poet with a mighty energy, as we see already in his *Pandora* and especially in *Meister's Journeymanship*. In that great movement of the time, Faust was to share and at last to end as its hero positively. But what of negative Mephistopheles? Goethe has in these long years of study and experience realized the inner nature of negation as self-undoing; thus he can handle the deepest character of the age, and indeed of himself. There is no doubt that he now feels, as never before, that he can complete the transcendent poetic task of his life. And so the old man with a reborn heart, resolves to set about the grand final fulfilment of himself, more heroic in his life-poem than any of his heroes.

Here we should note that Goethe, though especially disclaiming the title of philosopher, studied profoundly the philosophy of his time, and appropriated it in his way, and of course put it into his poem. We may repeat that he flourished in the very bloom of the supreme philosophical movement of the modern world from Kant to Hegel, and poetized it in numerous ways. But the most colossal envisagement of it is just Mephistopheles in his total sweep from the first No at the start of the poem till his final defeat at its end. He quite parallels the cycle of German Philosophy from Kant's Titanic denial

to Hegel's equally Titanic affirmation. It is a mistake to make *Faust* a poetic embodiment of any given system of Philosophy, a mistake which not a few of Hegel's ardent disciples have committed. On the other hand Goethe, the all-learner absorbed not a little from the Philosophy of his day, especially from Hegel who was professor in Goethe's university, Jena, at the very time when the poet was deeply engaged in his First Part of *Faust*, whose innermost theme is the evolution of Mephistopheles out of the age's spirit of negation.

Now the permanent contribution of Hegel to his time and to all time is not his system which has already crumbled, but the inner spirit working in man and in all finitude, which he caught, diagnosed and exemplified thousandfold in his works, and named Dialectic. Goethe may never have fully caught this very elusive principle in its abstract form, but, poet that he was, he concreted it to living shape in Mephistopheles, and made it pervasive throughout the whole length of his living poem (not including the rather dead or dying ecclesiastical appendix). Therein he above all other scribes of the period made the time-spirit show itself in writ. Thus we may well hold that this Faust poem in the last depths of its soul is one with the soul of the

time's Philosophy, both being ultimately utterances of the one basis consciousness of the age. In this sense we can call it the most philosophic of poems, with Schelling and others.

Still there is one scene in the Second Part in which the poet took a pre-conceived philosophic thought, and gave to it a poetic form. This scene is known to all deeper students of the poem as *The Mothers*. A dark uncanny, unearthly piece of work it is, in which *Faust* is to descend to the primitive forms or archetypes creative of all finitude; the very process of abstraction is poetized or at least metered and rhymed, until there dawns upon him the ultimate insight expressed abstractly with the words: "In thy Nothing I hope to find the All." This may be regarded as the philosophy of Mephistopheles, now to be grasped by Faust, and to be realized in the poem. It hints that play of the negative, with its inherent contradiction and final self-undoing, which brings forth the Universe as positive, here the All. So much Goethe picked up from the Philosophy of the time and diabolized it as the destroyer turning self-déstroyer. (For a further discussion of this pivotal scene see our Commentary *Faust II*, p. 89, etc., new edition.)

Evidently Goethe has inhaled the quintes-

sence of the great German philosophical movement, and breathed it forth into a character which acts it out from start to finish. And here we should not fail to note again the poet's present method: he seizes upon a pure idea in advance and creates a shape for it, or perchance he makes it create its own shape. This is quite the opposite of the poetic procedure which he enounced so emphatically in his early career: namely, that we must first grasp the reality and idealize that. But he has found in his long experience that both poetic methods are valid, each in its own sphere. So he in his old age breaks over his early limit and gives an outlook upon the new poetry. It was probably the mighty tide of Philosophy rising to its culmination during his life which drove him to poetize such a phenomenon, and to forge the outlines of a new art-form for its expressoin. So on this side as on others, the Second Part of *Faust* is prophetic, letting us glimpse a new inspiration, and even a New Mythology, not the transmitted old one in any of its many kinds, but the fresh created one by the poet to people his poetical cosmos.

It is recorded that in August, 1831, the Second Part of *Faust* was complete so that the manuscript was stitched together and laid away. He said to Eckermann: "the rest of

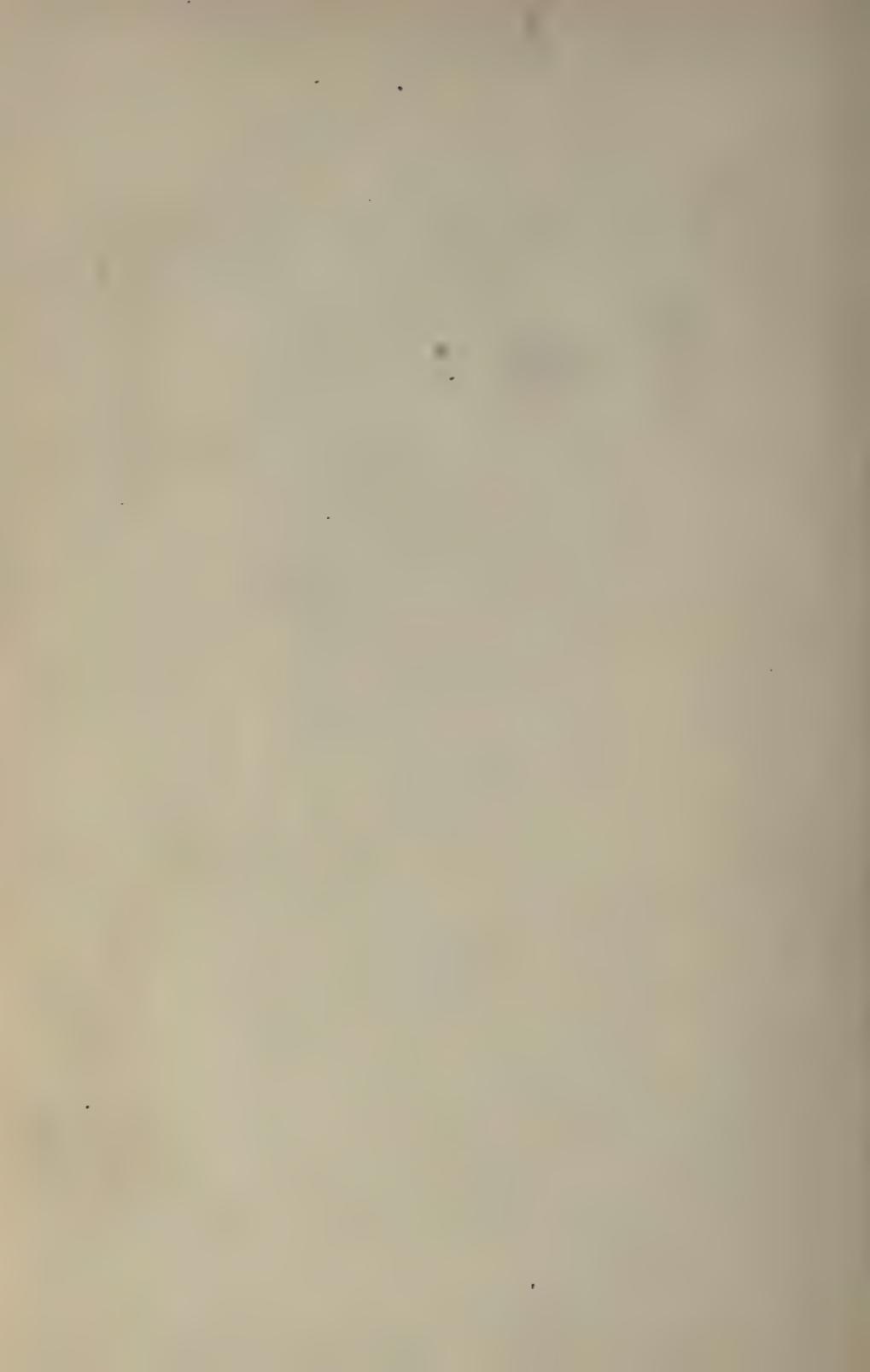
my life I regard as a free gift." Still he could not keep hands off; he continued to add touches to this supreme work of his life almost to the day of his death, which took place March 22, 1832.

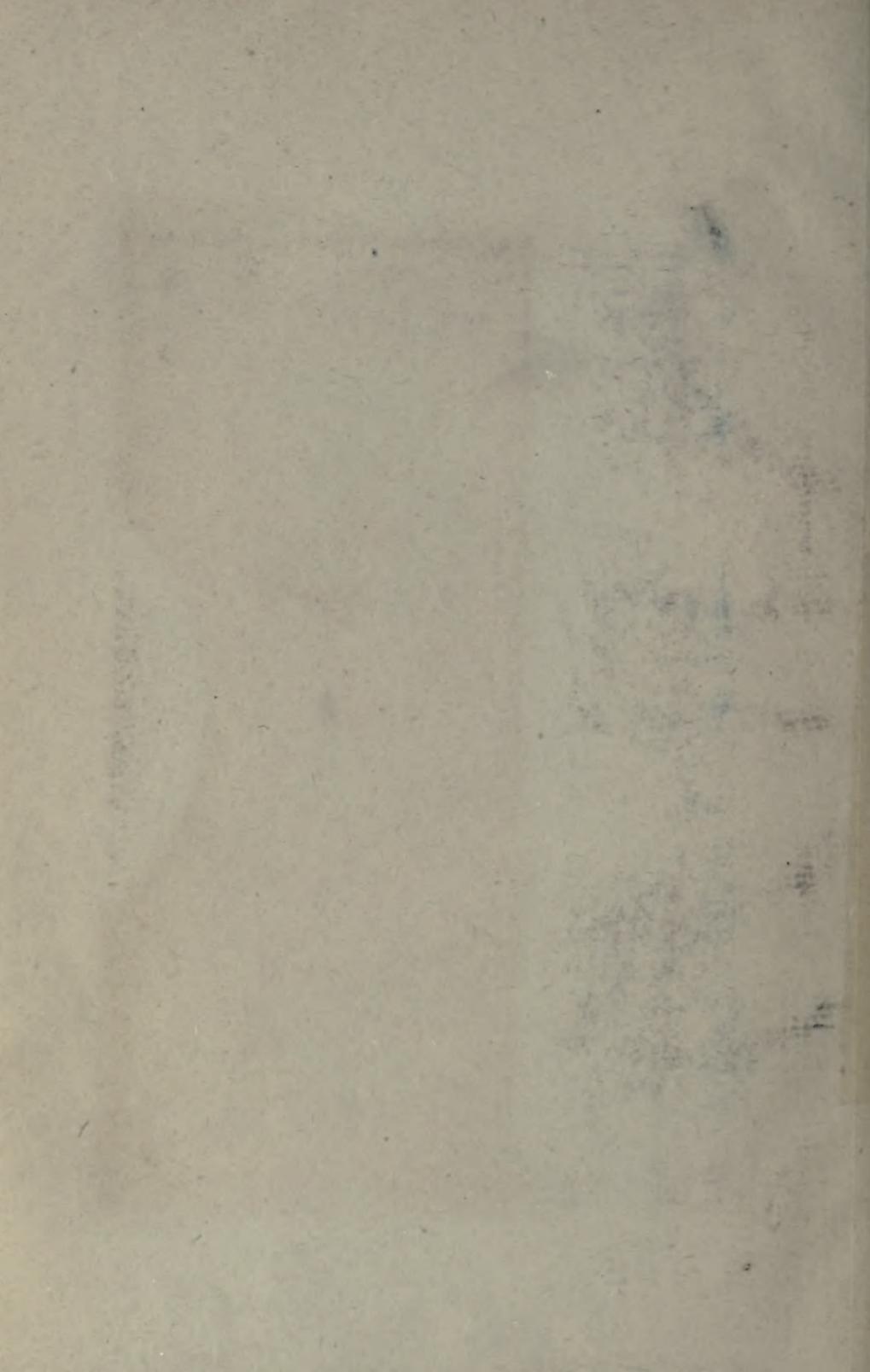
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